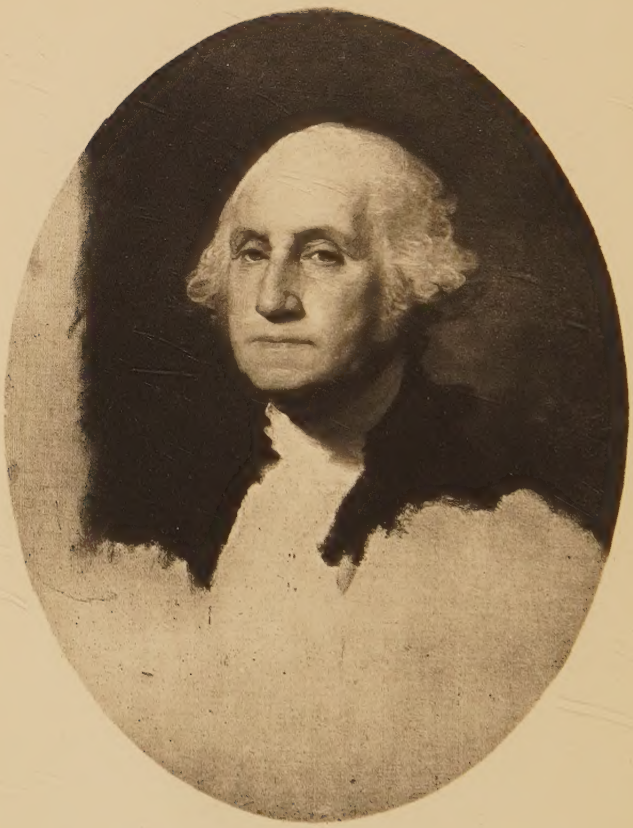
Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_Y0-CRT-615



G. Washington

American Statesmen

STANDARD LIBRARY EDITION

The Home of the Washington Family

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.

American Statesmen

GEORGE WASHINGTON

BY

HENRY CABOT LODGE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1899

HS.
WX
A515
VOL. 4

Copyright, 1889 and 1898,
By HENRY CABOT LODGE.

Copyright, 1898,
By HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.

All rights reserved.

QQAOHO

DEACCESSIONED BY
CHICAGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PRINTED COLLECTIONS

37887

WK
A515
vol.4

PREFACE

THIS edition has been carefully revised, and although very little has been added of late years to our knowledge of the facts of Washington's life, I have tried to examine all that has appeared. The researches of Mr. Waters, which were published just after these volumes in the first edition had passed through the press, enable me to give the Washington pedigree with certainty, and have turned conjecture into fact. The recent publication in full of Lear's memoranda, although they tell nothing new about Washington's last moments, help toward a completion of all the details of the scene.

H. C. LODGE.

WASHINGTON, February 7, 1898.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	1
I.	THE OLD DOMINION	15
II.	THE WASHINGTONS	30
III.	ON THE FRONTIER	54
IV.	LOVE AND MARRIAGE	95
V.	TAKING COMMAND	128
VI.	SAVING THE REVOLUTION	158
VII.	"MALICE DOMESTIC, AND FOREIGN LEVY"	185
VIII.	THE ALLIES	241
IX.	ARNOLD'S TREASON, AND THE WAR IN THE SOUTH	272
X.	YORKTOWN	301
XI.	PEACE	321

ILLUSTRATIONS

GEORGE WASHINGTON . . . . . *Frontispiece*

From the painting by Gilbert Stuart in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. This painting is owned by the Boston Athenæum and is known as the Athenæum portrait.

Autograph is from Washington's signature to a bill of exchange, from "Talks about Autographs" by George Birkbeck Hill.

The vignette of the residence of the Washington family is from "Homes of American Statesman," published by Alfred W. Putnam, New York.

Page

LAWRENCE WASHINGTON . . . . . *facing* 56

From an original painting in the possession of Lawrence Washington, Esq., Alexandria, Va., a great-great-great-nephew.

Autograph from MS. in New York Public Library, Lenox Building.

MISS MARY CARY . . . . . *facing* 96

From an original painting owned by Dr. James D. Moncure of Virginia, one of her descendants.

No autograph can be found.

MISS MARY PHILIPSE . . . . . *facing* 100

From Irving's "Washington," published by G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Autograph from Appleton's "Cyclopædia of American Biography."

WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DELAWARE . . . . *facing* 180

From the original painting by Emanuel Leutze in the New York Metropolitan Museum. The United States flag shown in the picture is an anachronism. The stars and stripes were first adopted by Congress in June, 1777; and any flag carried by Washington's army in December, 1776, would have consisted of the stripes with the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew in the blue field where the stars now appear.

INTRODUCTION

FEBRUARY 9 in the year 1800 was a gala day in Paris. Napoleon had decreed a triumphal procession, and on that day a splendid military ceremony was performed in the Champ de Mars, and the trophies of the Egyptian expedition were exultingly displayed. There were, however, two features in all this pomp and show which seemed strangely out of keeping with the glittering pageant and the sounds of victorious rejoicing. The standards and flags of the army were hung with crape, and after the grand parade the dignitaries of the land proceeded solemnly to the Temple of Mars, and heard the eloquent M. de Fontanes deliver an "Eloge Funèbre."[1]

[1] A report recently discovered shows that more even was intended than was actually done.

The following is a translation of the paper, the original of which is Nos. 172 and 173 of volume 51 of the manuscript series known as *Etats-Unis*, 1799, 1800 (years 7 and 8 of the French republic) : —

"*Report of Talleyrand, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the occasion of the death of George Washington.*

"A nation which some day will be a great nation, and which today is the wisest and happiest on the face of the earth, weeps at the bier of a man whose courage and genius contributed the most to free it from bondage, and elevate it to the rank of an independent and sovereign power. The regrets caused by the death of

About the same time, if tradition may be trusted, the flags upon the conquering Channel fleet of England were lowered to half-mast in

this great man, the memories aroused by these regrets, and a proper veneration for all that is held dear and sacred by mankind, impel us to give expression to our sentiments by taking part in an event which deprives the world of one of its brightest ornaments, and removes to the realm of history one of the noblest lives that ever honored the human race.

"The name of Washington is inseparably linked with a memorable epoch. He adorned this epoch by his talents and the nobility of his character, and with virtues that even envy dared not assail. History offers few examples of such renown. Great from the outset of his career, patriotic before his country had become a nation, brilliant and universal despite the passions and political resentments that would gladly have checked his career, his fame is to-day imperishable, — fortune having consecrated his claim to greatness, while the prosperity of a people destined for grand achievements is the best evidence of a fame ever to increase.

"His own country now honors his memory with funeral ceremonies, having lost a citizen whose public actions and unassuming grandeur in private life were a living example of courage, wisdom, and unselfishness; and France, which from the dawn of the American Revolution hailed with hope a nation, hitherto unknown, that was discarding the vices of Europe, which foresaw all the glory that this nation would bestow on humanity, and the enlightenment of governments that would ensue from the novel character of the social institutions and the new type of heroism of which Washington and America were models for the world at large, — France, I repeat, should depart from established usages and do honor to one whose fame is beyond comparison with that of others.

"The man who, amid the decadence of modern ages, first dared believe that he could inspire degenerate nations with courage to rise to the level of republican virtues, lived for all nations and for all centuries; and this nation, which first saw in the life and success of that illustrious man a foreboding of its destiny, and therein recognized a future to be realized and duties to be performed, has

token of grief for the same event which had caused the armies of France to wear the customary badges of mourning.

If some "traveler from an antique land" had observed these manifestations, he would have wondered much whose memory it was that had called them forth from these two great nations, then struggling fiercely with each other for supremacy on land and sea. His wonder would not have abated had he been told that the man for whom they mourned had wrested an empire from one, and at the time of his death was arming his countrymen against the other.

These signal honors were paid by England and France to a simple Virginian gentleman who had never left his own country, and who when he died held no other office than the titular command of a provisional army. Yet although these marks of respect from foreign nations were notable and striking, they were slight and formal in comparison with the silence and grief which fell upon the people of the United States when they heard that Washington was dead. He had died in the fullness of time, quietly, quickly, and in his own house, and yet his death called out a display of

every right to class him as a fellow-citizen. I therefore submit to the First Consul the following decree: —

"Bonaparte, First Consul of the republic, decrees as follows: —

"Article 1. A statue is to be erected to General Washington.

"Article 2. This statue is to be placed in one of the squares of Paris, to be chosen by the minister of the interior, and it shall be his duty to execute the present decree."

grief which has rarely been equaled in history. The trappings and suits of woe were there of course, but what made this mourning memorable was that the land seemed hushed with sadness, and that the sorrow dwelt among the people and was neither forced nor fleeting. Men carried it home with them to their firesides and to their churches, to their offices and their workshops. Every preacher took the life which had closed as the noblest of texts, and every orator made it the theme of his loftiest eloquence. For more than a year the newspapers teemed with eulogy and elegy, and both prose and poetry were severely taxed to pay tribute to the memory of the great one who had gone. The prose was often stilted and the verse was generally bad, but yet through it all, from the polished sentences of the funeral oration to the humble effusions of the obscurest poet's corner, there ran a strong and genuine feeling, which the highest art could not refine nor the clumsiest expression degrade.

From that time to this, the stream of praise has flowed on, ever deepening and strengthening, both at home and abroad. Washington alone in history seems to have risen so high in the estimation of men that criticism has shrunk away abashed, and has only been heard whispering in corners or growling hoarsely in the now famous house in Cheyne Row.

There is a world of meaning in all this, could we but rightly interpret it. It cannot be brushed

aside as mere popular superstition, formed of fancies and prejudices, to which intelligent opposition would be useless. Nothing is in fact more false than the way in which popular opinions are often belittled and made light of. The opinion of the world, however reached, becomes in the course of years or centuries the nearest approach we can make to final judgment on human things. Don Quixote may be dumb to one man, and the sonnets of Shakespeare may leave another cold and weary. But the fault is in the reader. There is no doubt of the greatness of Cervantes or Shakespeare, for they have stood the test of time, and the voices of generations of men, from which there is no appeal, have declared them to be great. The lyrics that all the world loves and repeats, the poetry which is often called hackneyed, is on the whole the best poetry. The pictures and statues that have drawn crowds of admiring gazers for centuries are the best. The things that are "caviare to the general" often undoubtedly have much merit, but they lack quite as often the warm, generous, and immortal vitality which appeals alike to rich and poor, to the ignorant and to the learned.

So it is with men. When years after his death the world agrees to call a man great, the verdict must be accepted. The historian may whiten or blacken, the critic may weigh and dissect, the form of the judgment may be altered, but the central fact remains, and with the man, whom

the world in its vague way has pronounced great, history must reckon one way or the other, whether for good or ill.

When we come to such a man as Washington, the case is still stronger. Men seem to have agreed that here was greatness which no one could question, and character which no one could fail to respect. Around other leaders of men, even around the greatest of them, sharp controversies have arisen, and they have their partisans dead as they had them living. Washington had enemies who assailed him, and friends whom he loved, but in death as in life he seems to stand alone, above conflict and superior to malice. In his own country there is no dispute as to his greatness or his worth. Englishmen, the most unsparing censors of everything American, have paid homage to Washington, from the days of Fox and Byron to those of Tennyson and Gladstone. In France his name has always been revered, and in distant lands those who have scarcely heard of the existence of the United States know the country of Washington. To the mighty cairn which the nation and the states have raised to his memory, stones have come from Greece, sending a fragment of the Parthenon; from Brazil and Switzerland, Turkey and Japan, Siam and India beyond the Ganges. On that sent by China we read: "In devising plans, Washington was more decided than Ching Shing or Woo Kwang; in winning a country he was braver than Tsau Tsau or Ling Pi. Wielding

his four-footed falchion, he extended the frontiers and refused to accept the Royal Dignity. The sentiments of the Three Dynasties have reappeared in him. Can any man of ancient or modern times fail to pronounce Washington peerless?" These comparisons so strange to our ears tell of a fame which has reached farther than we can readily conceive.

Washington stands as a type, and has stamped himself deep upon the imagination of mankind. Whether the image be true or false is of no consequence: the fact endures. He rises up from the dust of history as a Greek statue comes pure and serene from the earth in which it has lain for centuries. We know his deeds; but what was it in the man which has given him such a place in the affection, the respect, and the imagination of his fellow men throughout the world?

Perhaps this question has been fully answered already. Possibly every one who has thought upon the subject has solved the problem, so that even to state it is superfluous. Yet a brilliant writer, the latest historian of the American people, has said: "General Washington is known to us, and President Washington. But George Washington is an unknown man." These are pregnant words, and that they should be true seems to make any attempt to fill the great gap an act of sheer and hopeless audacity. Yet there can be certainly no reason for adding another to the almost countless lives of Washington unless it be

done with the object in view which Mr. McMaster indicates. Any such attempt may fail in execution, but if the purpose be right it has at least an excuse for its existence.

To try to add to the existing knowledge of the facts in Washington's career would have but little result beyond the multiplication of printed pages. The antiquarian, the historian, and the critic have exhausted every source, and the most minute details have been and still are the subject of endless writing and constant discussion. Every house he ever lived in has been drawn and painted; every portrait, and statue, and medal has been catalogued and engraved. His private affairs, his servants, his horses, his arms, even his clothes, have all passed beneath the merciless microscope of history. His biography has been written and rewritten. His letters have been drawn out from every lurking place, and have been given to the world in masses and in detachments. His battles have been fought over and over again, and his state papers have undergone an almost verbal examination. Yet, despite his vast fame and all the labors of the antiquarian and biographer, Washington is still not understood, — as a man he is unfamiliar to the posterity that reverences his memory. He has been misrepresented more or less covertly by hostile critics and by candid friends, and has been disguised and hidden away by the mistaken eulogy and erroneous theories of devout admirers. All that any one now can do,

therefore, is to endeavor from this mass of material to depict the very man himself in the various conjunctures of his life, and strive to see what he really was and what he meant then, and what he is and what he means to us and to the world to-day.

In the progress of time Washington has become in the popular imagination largely mythical; for mythical ideas grow up in this nineteenth century, notwithstanding its boasted intelligence, much as they did in the infancy of the race. The old sentiment of humanity, more ancient and more lasting than any records or monuments, which led men in the dawn of history to worship their ancestors and the founders of states, still endures. As the centuries have gone by, this sentiment has lost its religious flavor, and has become more and more restricted in its application, but it has never been wholly extinguished. Let some man arise great above the ordinary bounds of greatness, and the feeling which caused our progenitors to bow down at the shrines of their forefathers and chiefs leads us to invest our modern hero with a mythical character, and picture him in our imagination as a being to whom, a few thousand years ago, altars would have been builded and libations poured out.

Thus we have to-day in our minds a Washington grand, solemn, and impressive. In this guise he appears as a man of lofty intellect, vast moral force, supremely successful and fortunate, and wholly apart from and above all his fellow-men.

This lonely figure rises up to our imagination with all the imperial splendor of the Livian Augustus, and with about as much warmth and life as that unrivaled statue. In this vague but quite serious idea there is a great deal of truth, but not the whole truth. It is the myth of genuine love and veneration springing from the inborn gratitude of man to the founders and chiefs of his race, but it is not by any means the only one of its family. There is another, equally diffused, of wholly different parentage. In its inception this second myth is due to the itinerant parson, bookmaker, and bookseller, Mason Weems. He wrote a brief biography of Washington, of trifling historical value, yet with sufficient literary skill to make it widely popular. It neither appealed to nor was read by the cultivated and instructed few, but it reached the homes of the masses of the people. It found its way to the bench of the mechanic, to the house of the farmer, to the log cabins of the frontiersman and pioneer. It was carried across the continent on the first waves of advancing settlement. Its anecdotes and its simplicity of thought commended it to children both at home and at school, and, passing through edition after edition, its statements were widely spread, and it colored insensibly the ideas of hundreds of persons who never had heard even the name of the author. To Weems we owe the anecdote of the cherry-tree, and other tales of a similar nature. He wrote with Dr. Beattie's life of his

son before him as a model, and the result is that Washington comes out in his pages a faultless prig. Whether Weems intended it or not, that is the result which he produced, and that is the Washington who was developed from the wide sale of his book. When this idea took definite and permanent shape it caused a reaction. There was a revolt against it, for the hero thus engendered had qualities which the national sense of humor could not endure in silence. The consequence is, that the Washington of Weems has afforded an endless theme for joke and burlesque. Every professional American humorist almost has tried his hand at it; and with each recurring 22d of February the hard-worked jesters of the daily newspapers take it up and make a little fun out of it, sufficient for the day that is passing over them. The opportunity is tempting, because of the ease with which fun can be made when that fundamental source of humor, a violent contrast, can be employed. But there is no irreverence in it all, for the jest is not aimed at the real Washington, but at the Washington portrayed in the Weems biography. The worthy "rector of Mount Vernon," as he called himself, meant no harm, and there is a good deal of truth, no doubt, in his book. But the blameless and priggish boy, and the equally faultless and uninteresting man, whom he originated, have become in the process of development a myth. So in its further development is the Washington of the humorist a myth. Both

alike are utterly and crudely false. They resemble their great original as much as Greenough's classically nude statue, exposed to the incongruities of the North American climate, resembles in dress and appearance the general of our armies and the first President of the United States.

Such are the myth-makers. They are widely different from the critics who have assailed Washington in a sidelong way, and who can be better dealt with in a later chapter. These last bring charges which can be met; the myth-maker presents a vague conception, extremely difficult to handle because it is so elusive.

One of our well-known historical scholars and most learned antiquarians, not long ago, in an essay vindicating the "traditional Washington," treated with scorn the idea of a "new Washington" being discovered. In one sense this is quite right, in another totally wrong. There can be no new Washington discovered, because there never was but one. But the real man has been so overlaid with myths and traditions, and so distorted by misleading criticisms, that, as has already been suggested, he has been wellnigh lost. We have the religious or statuesque myth, we have the Weems myth, and the ludicrous myth of the writer of paragraphs. We have the stately hero of Sparks, and Everett, and Marshall, and Irving, with all his great deeds as general and president duly recorded and set down in polished and eloquent sentences; and we know him to be

very great and wise and pure, and, be it said with bated breath, very dry and cold. We are also familiar with the commonplace man who so wonderfully illustrated the power of character as set forth by various persons, either from love of novelty or because the great chief seemed to get in the way of their own heroes.

If this is all, then the career of Washington and his towering fame present a problem of which the world has never seen the like. But this cannot be all: there must be more behind. Every one knows the famous Stuart portrait of Washington. The last effort of the artist's cunning is there employed to paint his great subject for posterity. How serene and beautiful it is! It is a noble picture for future ages to look upon. Still it is not all. There is in the dining-room of Memorial Hall at Cambridge another portrait, painted by Savage. It is cold and dry, hard enough to serve for the signboard of an inn, and able, one would think, to withstand all weathers. Yet this picture has something which Stuart left out. There is a rugged strength in the face which gives us pause, there is a massiveness in the jaw, telling of an iron grip and a relentless will, which has infinite meaning.

> "Here 's John the Smith's rough-hammered head. Great eye,
> Gross jaw, and griped lips do what granite can
> To give you the crown-grasper. What a man!"

In death as in life, there is something about Washington, call it greatness, dignity, majesty,

what you will, which seems to hold men aloof and keep them from knowing him. In truth he was a most difficult man to know. Carlyle, crying out through hundreds of pages and myriads of words for the "silent man," passed by with a sneer the most absolutely silent great man that history can show. Washington's letters and speeches and messages fill many volumes, but they are all on business. They are profoundly silent as to the writer himself. From this Carlyle concluded apparently that there was nothing to tell, — a very shallow conclusion if it was the one he really reached. Such an idea was certainly far, very far, from the truth.

Behind the popular myths, behind the statuesque figure of the orator and the preacher, behind the general and the president of the historian, there was a strong, vigorous man, in whose veins ran warm, red blood, in whose heart were stormy passions and deep sympathy for humanity, in whose brain were far-reaching thoughts, and who was informed throughout his being with a resistless will. The veil of his silence is not often lifted, and never intentionally, but now and then there is a glimpse behind it; and in stray sentences and in little incidents strenuously gathered together; above all, in the right interpretation of the words, and the deeds, and the true history known to all men, — we can surely find George Washington "the noblest figure that ever stood in the forefront of a nation's life."

GEORGE WASHINGTON

CHAPTER I

THE OLD DOMINION

To know George Washington, we must first of all understand the society in which he was born and brought up. As certain lilies draw their colors from the subtle qualities of the soil hidden beneath the water upon which they float, so are men profoundly affected by the obscure and insensible influences which surround their childhood and youth. The art of the chemist may discover perhaps the secret agent which tints the white flower with blue or pink, but very often the elements, which analysis detects, nature alone can combine. The analogy is not strained or fanciful when we apply it to a past society. We can separate, and classify, and label the various elements, but to combine them in such a way as to form a vivid picture is a work of surpassing difficulty. This is especially true of such a land as Virginia in the middle of the last century. Virginian society, as it existed at that period, is utterly extinct. John

Randolph said it had departed before the year 1800. Since then another century, with all its manifold changes, has wellnigh come and gone. Most important of all, the last surviving institution of colonial Virginia has been swept away in the crash of civil war, which has opened a gulf between past and present wider and deeper than any that time alone could make.

Life and society as they existed in the Virginia of the eighteenth century seem, moreover, to have been sharply broken and ended. We cannot trace our steps backward, as is possible in most cases, over the road by which the world has traveled since those days. We are compelled to take a long leap mentally in order to land ourselves securely in the Virginia which honored the second George, and looked up to Walpole and Pitt as the arbiters of its fate.

We live in a period of great cities, rapid communication, vast and varied business interests, enormous diversity of occupation, great industries, diffused intelligence, farming by steam, and with everything and everybody pervaded by an unresting, high-strung activity. We transport ourselves to the Virginia of Washington's boyhood, and find a people without cities or towns, with no means of communication except what was afforded by rivers and wood roads; having no trades, no industries, no means of spreading knowledge, only one occupation, clumsily performed; and living a quiet, monotonous existence, which can now

hardly be realized. It is "a far cry to Loch-Awe," as the Scotch proverb has it; and this old Virginian society, although we should find it sorry work living in it, is both pleasant and picturesque in the pages of history.

The population of Virginia, advancing toward half a million, and divided pretty equally between the free whites and the enslaved blacks, was densest, to use a most inappropriate word, at the water's edge and near the mouths of the rivers. Thence it crept backwards, following always the lines of the watercourses, and growing ever thinner and more scattered until it reached the Blue Ridge. Behind the mountains was the wilderness, haunted, as old John Lederer said a century earlier, by monsters, and inhabited, as the eighteenth-century Virginians very well knew, by savages and wild beasts, much more real and dangerous than the hobgoblins of their ancestors.

The population, in proportion to its numbers, was very widely distributed. It was not collected in groups, after the fashion with which we are now familiar, for then there were no cities or towns in Virginia. The only place which could pretend to either name was Norfolk, the solitary seaport, which, with its six or seven thousand inhabitants, formed the most glaring exception that any rule solicitous of proof could possibly desire. Williamsburg, the capital, was a straggling village, somewhat overweighted with the public buildings and those of the college. It would

light up into life and vivacity during the season of politics and society, and then relapse again into the country stillness. Outside of Williamsburg and Norfolk there were various points which passed in the catalogue and on the map for towns, but which in reality were merely the shadows of a name. The most populous consisted of a few houses inhabited by storekeepers and traders, some tobacco warehouses, and a tavern, clustered about the church or court-house. Many others had only the church, or, if a county seat, the church and court-house, keeping solitary state in the woods. There once a week the sound of prayer and gossip, or at longer intervals the voices of lawyers and politicians, and the shouts of the wrestlers on the green, broke through the stillness which with the going down of the sun resumed its sway in the forests.

There was little chance here for that friction of mind with mind, or for that quick interchange of thought and sentiment and knowledge which are familiar to the dwellers in cities, and which have driven forward more rapidly than all else what we call civilization. Rare meetings for special objects with persons as solitary in their lives and as ill-informed as himself, constituted to the average Virginian the world of society, and there was nothing from outside to supply the deficiencies at home. Once a fortnight a mail crawled down from the North, and once a month another crept on to the South. George Washington was four

years old when the first newspaper was published in the colony, and he was twenty when the first actors appeared at Williamsburg. What was not brought was not sought. The Virginians did not go down to the sea in ships. They were not a seafaring race, and as they had neither trade nor commerce they were totally destitute of the inquiring, enterprising spirit, and of the knowledge brought by those pursuits which involve travel and adventure. The English tobacco-ships worked their way up the rivers, taking the great staple, and leaving their varied goods, and their tardy news from Europe, wherever they stopped. This was the sum of the information and intercourse which Virginia got from across the sea, for travelers were practically unknown. Few came on business, fewer still from curiosity. Stray peddlers from the North, or trappers from beyond the mountains with their packs of furs, chiefly constituted what would now be called the traveling public. There were in truth no means of traveling except on foot, on horseback, or by boat on the rivers, which formed the best and most expeditious highways. Stage-coaches, or other public conveyances, were unknown. Over some of the roads the rich man, with his six horses and black outriders, might make his way in a lumbering carriage, but most of the roads were little better than woodland paths; and the rivers, innocent of bridges, offered in the uncertain fords abundance of inconvenience, not unmixed with peril. The

taverns were execrable, and only the ever-ready hospitality of the people made it possible to get from place to place. The result was that the Virginians stayed at home, and sought and welcomed the rare stranger at their gates as if they were well aware that they were entertaining angels.

It is not difficult to sift this home-keeping people, and find out that portion which was Virginia, for the mass was but an appendage of the small fraction which ruled, led, and did the thinking for the whole community. Half the people were slaves, and in that single wretched word their history is told. They were, on the whole, well and kindly treated, but they have no meaning in history except as an institution, and as an influence in the lives, feelings, and character of the men who made the state.

Above the slaves, little better than they in condition, but separated from them by the wide gulf of race and color, were the indented white servants, some convicts, some redemptioners. They, too, have their story told when we have catalogued them. We cross another gulf and come to the farmers, to the men who grew wheat as well as tobacco on their own land, sometimes working alone, sometimes the owners of a few slaves. Some of these men were of the class well known since as the "poor whites" of the South, the weaker brothers who could not resist the poison of slavery, but sank under it into ignorance and poverty. They were contented because their

skins were white, and because they were thereby part of an aristocracy to whom labor was a badge of serfdom. The larger portion of this middle class, however, were thrifty and industrious enough. Including as they did in their ranks the hunters and pioneers, the traders and merchants, all the freemen in fact who toiled and worked, they formed the mass of the white population, and furnished the bone and sinew and some of the intellectual power of Virginia. The only professional men were the clergy, for the lawyers were few, and growing to importance only as the Revolution began; while the physicians were still fewer, and as a class of no importance at all. The clergy were a picturesque element in the social landscape, but they were as a body very poor representatives of learning, religion, and morality. They ranged from hedge parsons and Fleet chaplains, who had slunk away from England to find a desirable obscurity in the new world, to divines of real learning and genuine piety, who were the supporters of the college, and who would have been a credit to any society. These last, however, were lamentably few in number. The mass of the clergy were men who worked their own lands, sold tobacco, were the boon companions of the planters, hunted, shot, drank hard, and lived well, performing their sacred duties in a perfunctory and not always in a decent manner.

The clergy, however, formed the stepping-stone

socially between the farmers, traders, and small planters, and the highest and most important class in Virginian society. The great planters were the men who owned, ruled, and guided Virginia. Their vast estates were scattered along the rivers from the seacoast to the mountains. Each plantation was in itself a small village, with the owner's house in the centre, surrounded by outbuildings and negro cabins, and the pastures, meadows, and fields of tobacco stretching away on all sides. The rare traveler, pursuing his devious way on horseback or in a boat, would catch sight of these noble estates opening up from the road or the river, and then the forest would close in around him for several miles, until through the thinning trees he would see again the white cabins and the cleared fields of the next plantation.

In such places dwelt the Virginian planters, surrounded by their families and slaves, and in a solitude broken only by the infrequent and eagerly welcomed stranger, by their duties as vestrymen and magistrates, or by the annual pilgrimage to Williamsburg in search of society, or to sit in the House of Burgesses. They were occupied by the care of their plantations, which involved a good deal of riding in the open air, but which was at best an easy and indolent pursuit made light by slave labor and trained overseers. As a result the planters had an abundance of spare time, which they devoted to cock-fighting,

horse-racing, fishing, shooting, and fox-hunting, — all, save the first, wholesome and manly sports, but which did not demand any undue mental strain. There is, indeed, no indication that the Virginians had any great love for intellectual exertion. When the amiable attorney-general of Charles II. said to the Virginian commissioners, pleading the cause of learning and religion, "Damn your souls! grow tobacco!" he uttered a precept which the mass of the planters seem to have laid to heart. For fifty years there were no schools, and down to the Revolution even the apologies bearing that honored name were few, and the college was small and struggling. In some of the great families, the eldest sons would be sent to England and to the great universities: they would make the grand tour, play a part in the fashionable society of London, and come back to their plantations fine gentlemen and scholars. Such was Colonel Byrd, in the early part of the eighteenth century, a friend of the Earl of Orrery, and the author of certain amusing memoirs. Such at a later day was Arthur Lee, doctor and diplomat, student and politician. But most of these young gentlemen thus sent abroad to improve their minds and manners led a life not materially different from that of our charming friend, Harry Warrington, after his arrival in England.

The sons who stayed at home sometimes gathered a little learning from the clergyman of the parish, or received a fair education at the College

of William and Mary, but very many did not have even so much as this. There was not in truth much use for learning in managing a plantation or raising horses, and men get along surprisingly well without that which they do not need, especially if the acquisition demands labor. The Virginian planter thought little and read less, and there were no learned professions to hold out golden prizes and stimulate the love of knowledge. The women fared even worse, for they could not go to Europe or to William and Mary's, so that after exhausting the teaching capacity of the parson they settled down to a round of household duties and to the cares of a multitude of slaves, working much harder and more steadily than their lords and masters ever thought of doing.

The only general form of intellectual exertion was that of governing. The planters managed local affairs through the vestries, and ruled Virginia in the House of Burgesses. To this work they paid strict attention, and, after the fashion of their race, did it very well and very efficiently. They were an extremely competent body whenever they made up their minds to do anything; but they liked the life and habits of Squire Western, and saw no reason for adopting any others until it was necessary.

There were, of course, vast differences in the condition of the planters. Some counted their acres by thousands and their slaves by hundreds, while others scrambled along as best they might

with one plantation and a few score of negroes. Some dwelt in very handsome houses, picturesque and beautiful, like Gunston Hall or Stratford, or in vast, tasteless, and extravagant piles like Rosewell. Others were contented with very modest houses, consisting of one story with a gabled roof, and flanked by two massive chimneys. In some houses there was a brave show of handsome plate and china, fine furniture, and London-made carriages, rich silks and satins, and brocaded dresses. In others there were earthenware and pewter, homespun and woolen, and little use for horses, except in the plough or under the saddle.

But there were certain qualities common to all the Virginia planters. The luxury was imperfect. The splendor was sometimes barbaric. There were holes in the brocades, and the fresh air of heaven would often blow through a broken window upon the glittering silver and the costly china. It was an easy-going aristocracy, unfinished, and frequently slovenly in its appointments, after the fashion of the warmer climates and the regions of slavery.

Everything was plentiful except ready money. In this rich and poor were alike. They were all ahead of their income, and it seems as if, from one cause or another, from extravagance or improvidence, from horses or the gaming-table, every Virginian family went through bankruptcy about once in a generation.

When Harry Warrington arrived in England,

all his relations at Castlewood regarded the handsome young fellow as a prince, with his acres and his slaves. It was a natural and pleasing delusion, born of the possession of land and serfs, to which the Virginians themselves gave ready credence. They forgot that the land was so plentiful that it was of little value; that slaves were the most wasteful form of labor; and that a failure of the tobacco crop, pledged before it was gathered, meant ruin, although they had been reminded more than once of this last impressive fact. They knew that they had plenty to eat and drink, and a herd of people to wait upon them and cultivate their land, as well as obliging London merchants always ready to furnish every luxury in return for the mortgage of a crop or an estate. So they gave themselves little anxiety as to the future and lived in the present, very much to their own satisfaction.

To the communities of trade and commerce, to the mercantile and industrial spirit of to-day, such an existence and such modes of life appear distressingly lax and unprogressive. The sages of the bank parlors and the counting-rooms would shake their heads at such spendthrifts as these, refuse to discount their paper, and confidently predict that by no possibility could they come to good. They had their defects, no doubt, these planters and farmers of Virginia. The life they led was strongly developed on the animal side, and was perhaps neither stimulating nor elevating.

The living was the reverse of plain, and the thinking was neither extremely high nor notably laborious. Yet in this very particular there is something rather restful and pleasant to the eye wearied by the sight of incessant movement, and to the ear deafened by the continual shout that nothing is good that does not change, and that all change must be good. We should probably find great discomforts and many unpleasant limitations in the life and habits of a hundred years ago on any part of the globe, and yet at a time when it seems as if rapidity and movement were the last words and the ultimate ideals of civilization, it is rather agreeable to turn to such a community as the eighteenth-century planters of Virginia. They lived contentedly on the acres of their fathers, and except at rare and stated intervals they had no other interests than those furnished by their ancestral domain. At the court-house, at the vestry, or in Williamsburg, they met their neighbors and talked very keenly about the politics of Europe, or the affairs of the colony. They were little troubled about religion, but they worshiped after the fashion of their fathers, and had a serious fidelity to church and king. They wrangled with their governors over appropriations, but they lived on good terms with those eminent persons, and attended state balls at what they called the palace, and danced and made merry with much stateliness and grace. Their every-day life ran on in the quiet of their plantations as calmly as one of their

own rivers. The English trader would come and go; the infrequent stranger would be received and welcomed; Christmas would be kept in hearty English fashion; young men from a neighboring estate would ride over through the darkening woods to court, or dance, or play the fiddle, like Patrick Henry or Thomas Jefferson; and these simple events were all that made a ripple on the placid stream. Much time was given to sports, rough, hearty, manly sports, with a spice of danger, and these, with an occasional adventurous dash into the wilderness, kept them sound and strong and brave, both in body and mind. There was nothing languid or effeminate about the Virginian planter. He was a robust man, quite ready to fight or work when the time came, and well fitted to deal with affairs when he was needed. He was a free-handed, hospitable, generous being, not much given to study or thought, but thoroughly public-spirited and keenly alive to the interests of Virginia. Above all things he was an aristocrat, set apart by the dark line of race, color, and hereditary servitude, as proud as the proudest Austrian with his endless quarterings, as sturdy and vigorous as an English yeoman, and as jealous of his rights and privileges as any baron who stood by John at Runnymede. To this aristocracy, careless and indolent, given to rough pleasures and indifferent to the finer and higher sides of life, the call came, as it comes to all men sooner or later, and in response they gave their

country soldiers, statesmen, and jurists of the highest order, and fit for the great work they were asked to do. We must go back to Athens to find another instance of a society so small in numbers, and yet capable of such an outburst of ability and force. They were of sound English stock, with a slight admixture of the Huguenots, the best blood of France; and although for a century and a half they had seemed to stagnate in the New World, they were strong, fruitful, and effective beyond the measure of ordinary races when the hour of peril and trial was at hand.

CHAPTER II

THE WASHINGTONS

Such was the world and such the community which counted as a small fraction the Washington family. Our immediate concern is with that family, for before we approach the man we must know his ancestors. The greatest leader of scientific thought in this century has come to the aid of the genealogist, and given to the results of the latter's somewhat discredited labors a vitality and meaning which it seemed impossible that dry and dusty pedigrees and barren tables of descent should ever possess. We have always selected our race-horses according to the doctrines of evolution, and we now study the character of a great man by examining first the history of his forefathers.

Washington made so great an impression upon the world in his lifetime that genealogists at once undertook for him the construction of a suitable pedigree. The excellent Sir Isaac Heard, garter king-at-arms, worked out a genealogy which seemed reasonable enough, and then wrote to the president in relation to it. Washington in reply thanked him for his politeness, sent him the Virginian genealogy of his own branch, and after expressing

a courteous interest said, in his simple and direct fashion, that he had been a busy man and had paid but little attention to the subject. His knowledge about his English forefathers was in fact extremely slight. He had heard merely that the first of the name in Virginia had come from one of the northern counties of England, but whether from Lancashire or Yorkshire, or one still more northerly, he could not tell. Sir Isaac was not thoroughly satisfied with the correctness of his own work, but presently Baker took it up in his history of Northamptonshire, and perfected it to his own satisfaction and that of the world in general. This genealogy derived Washington's descent from the owners of the manor of Sulgrave, in Northamptonshire, and thence carried it back to the Norman knight, Sir William de Hertburn. According to this pedigree the Virginian settlers, John and Lawrence, were the sons of Lawrence Washington of Sulgrave Manor, and this genealogy was adopted by Sparks and Irving, as well as by the public at large. Twenty years ago, however, Colonel Chester, by his researches, broke the most essential link in the chain forged by Heard and Baker, proving clearly that the Virginian settlers could not have been the sons of Lawrence of Sulgrave, as identified by the garter king-at-arms. Still more recently the mythical spirit has taken violent possession of the Washington ancestry, and an ingenious gentleman has traced the pedigree of our first president back to

Thorfinn and thence to Odin, which is sufficiently remote, dignified, and lofty to satisfy the most exacting Welshman that ever lived. Still the breach made by Colonel Chester was not repaired, although many writers, including some who should have known better, clung with undiminished faith to the Heard pedigree. It was known that Colonel Chester himself believed that he had found the true line, coming, it is supposed, through a younger branch of the Sulgrave race, but he died before he had discovered the one bit of evidence necessary to prove an essential step, and he was too conscientiously accurate to leave anything to conjecture. Since then the researches of Mr. Henry E. Waters have established the pedigree of the Virginian Washingtons, and we are now able to know something of the men from whom George Washington drew his descent.

In that interesting land where everything, according to our narrow ideas, is upside down, it is customary, when an individual arrives at distinction, to confer nobility upon his ancestors instead of upon his children. The Washingtons offer an interesting example of the application of this Chinese system in the Western world, for, if they have not been actually ennobled in recognition of the deeds of their great descendant, they have at least become the subjects of intense and general interest. Every one of the name who could be discovered anywhere has been dragged forth into the light, and has had all that was known about

him duly recorded and set down. By scanning family trees and pedigrees, and picking up stray bits of information here and there, we can learn in a rude and general fashion what manner of men those were who claimed descent from William of Hertburn, and who bore the name of Washington in the mother-country. As Mr. Galton passes a hundred faces before the same highly sensitized plate, and gets a photograph which is a likeness of no one of his subjects, and yet resembles them all, so we may turn the camera of history upon these Washingtons, as they flash up for a moment from the dim past, and hope to obtain what Professor Huxley calls a "generic" picture of the race, even if the outlines be somewhat blurred and indistinct.

In the North of England, in the region conquered first by Saxons and then by Danes, lies the little village of Washington. It came into the possession of Sir William de Hertburn, and belonged to him at the time of the Boldon Book in 1183. Soon after, he or his descendants took the name of De Wessyngton, and there they remained for two centuries, knights of the palatinate, holding their lands by a military tenure, fighting in all the wars, and taking part in tournaments with becoming splendor. By the beginning of the fifteenth century the line of feudal knights of the palatinate was extinct, and the manor passed from the family by the marriage of Dionisia de Wessyngton. But the main stock had in the mean time thrown out many offshoots,

which had taken firm root in other parts and in many counties of England. We hear of several who came in various ways to eminence. There was the learned and vigorous prior of Durham, John de Wessyngton, probably one of the original family, and the name appears in various places after his time in records and on monuments, indicating a flourishing and increasing race. Lawrence Washington, the direct ancestor of the first President of the United States, was, in the sixteenth century, the mayor of Northampton, and received from King Henry VIII. the manor of Sulgrave in 1538. In the next century we find traces of Robert Washington of the Adwick family, a rich merchant of Leeds, and of his son Joseph Washington, a learned lawyer and author, of Gray's Inn. About the same time we hear of Richard Washington and Philip Washington holding high places at University College, Oxford. The Sulgrave branch, however, was the most numerous and prosperous. From the mayor of Northampton were descended Sir William Washington, who married the half-sister of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham; Sir Henry Washington, who made a desperate defense of Worcester against the forces of the Parliament in 1646; Lieutenant-Colonel James Washington, who fell at the siege of Pontefract, fighting for King Charles; another James, of a later time, who was implicated in Monmouth's rebellion, fled to Holland and became the progenitor of a flourishing

and successful family, which has spread to Germany and there been ennobled; Sir Lawrence Washington, of Garsdon, whose grand-daughter married Robert Shirley, Baron Ferrers; and others of less note, but all men of property and standing. They seem to have been a successful, thrifty race, owning lands and estates, wise magistrates and good soldiers, marrying well, and increasing their wealth and strength from generation to generation. They were of Norman stock, knights and gentlemen in the full sense of the word before the French Revolution, and we can detect in them here and there a marked strain of the old Norse blood, carrying with it across the centuries the wild Berserker spirit which for centuries made the adventurous Northmen the terror of Europe. They were a strong race evidently, these Washingtons, whom we see now only by glimpses through the mists of time, not brilliant apparently, never winning the very highest fortune, having their failures and reverses no doubt, but on the whole prudent, bold men, always important in their several stations, ready to fight and ready to work, and as a rule successful in that which they set themselves to do.

In 1658 the two brothers, John and Lawrence, appeared in Virginia. As has been proved by Mr. Waters, they were of the Sulgrave family, the sons of Lawrence Washington, fifth son of the elder Lawrence of Sulgrave and Brington. The father of the emigrants was a fellow of Brase-

nose College, Oxford, and rector of Purleigh, from which living he was ejected by the Puritans as both "scandalous" and "malignant." That he was guilty of the former charge we may well doubt; but that he was, in the language of the time, "malignant," must be admitted, for all his family, including his brothers, Sir William Washington of Packington, and Sir John Washington of Thrapston, his nephew, Sir Henry Washington, and his nephew-in-law, William Legge, ancestor of the Earl of Dartmouth, were strongly on the side of the king. In a marriage which seems to have been regarded as beneath the dignity of the family, and in the poverty consequent upon the ejectment from his living, we can find the reason for the sons of the Rev. Lawrence Washington going forth into Virginia to find their fortune, and flying from the world of victorious Puritanism which offered just then so little hope to royalists like themselves. Yet what was poverty in England was something much more agreeable in the New World of America. The emigrant brothers at all events seem to have had resources of a sufficient kind, and to have been men of substance, for they purchased lands and established themselves at Bridges Creek, in Westmoreland County. With this brief statement, Lawrence disappears, leaving us nothing further than the knowledge that he had numerous descendants. John, with whom we are more concerned, figures at once in the colonial records of Maryland. He made com-

plaint to the Maryland authorities, soon after his arrival, against Edward Prescott, merchant, and captain of the ship in which he had come over, for hanging a woman during the voyage for witchcraft. We have a letter of his, explaining that he could not appear at the first trial because he was about to baptize his son, and had bidden the neighbors and gossips to the feast. A little incident this, dug out of the musty records, but it shows us an active, generous man, intolerant of oppression, public-spirited and hospitable, social, and friendly in his new relations. He soon after was called to mourn the death of his English wife and of two children, but he speedily consoled himself by taking a second wife, Anne Pope, by whom he had three children, Lawrence, John, and Anne. According to the Virginian tradition, John Washington the elder was a surveyor, and made a location of lands which was set aside because they had been assigned to the Indians. It is quite apparent that he was a forehanded person who acquired property and impressed himself upon his neighbors. In 1667, when he had been but ten years in the colony, he was chosen to the House of Burgesses; and eight years later he was made a colonel and sent with a thousand men to join the Marylanders in destroying the "Susquehannocks," at the "Piscataway" fort, on account of some murdering begun by another tribe. As a feat of arms, the expedition was not a very brilliant affair. The Virginians and Marylanders

killed half a dozen Indian chiefs during a parley, and then invested the fort. After repulsing several sorties, they stupidly allowed the Indians to escape in the night and carry murder and pillage through the outlying settlements, lighting up first the flames of savage war and then the fiercer fire of domestic insurrection. In the next year we hear again of John Washington in the House of Burgesses, when Sir William Berkeley assailed his troops for the murder of the Indians during the parley. Popular feeling, however, was clearly with the colonel, for nothing was done and the matter dropped. At that point, too, in 1676, John Washington disappears from sight, and we know only that as his will was proved in 1677, he must have died soon after the scene with Berkeley. He was buried in the family vault at Bridges Creek, and left a good estate to be divided among his children. The colonel was evidently both a prudent and popular man, and quite disposed to bustle about in the world in which he found himself. He acquired lands, came to the front at once as a leader although a new-comer in the country, was evidently a fighting man as is shown by his selection to command the Virginian forces, and was honored by his neighbors, who gave his name to the parish in which he dwelt. Then he died and his son Lawrence reigned in his stead, and became by his wife, Mildred Warner, the father of John, Augustine, and Mildred Washington.

This second son, Augustine, farmer and planter like his forefathers, married first Jane Butler, by whom he had three sons and a daughter, and second, Mary Ball, by whom he had four sons and two daughters. The eldest child of these second nuptials was named George, and was born on February 11 (O. S.), 1732, at Bridges Creek. The house in which this event occurred was a plain, wooden farmhouse of the primitive Virginian pattern, with four rooms on the ground floor, an attic story with a long, sloping roof, and a massive brick chimney. Three years after George Washington's birth it is said to have been burned, and the family for this or some other reason removed to another estate in what is now Stafford County. The second house was like the first, and stood on rising ground looking across a meadow to the Rappahannock, and beyond the river to the village of Fredericksburg, which was nearly opposite. Here, in 1743, Augustine Washington died somewhat suddenly, at the age of forty-nine, from an attack of gout brought on by exposure in the rain, and was buried with his fathers in the old vault at Bridges Creek. Here, too, the boyhood of Washington was passed, and therefore it becomes necessary to look about us and see what we can learn of this important period of his life.

We know nothing about his father, except that he was kindly and affectionate, attached to his wife and children, and apparently absorbed in

the care of his estates. On his death the children came wholly under the maternal influence and direction. Much has been written about the "mother of Washington," but as a matter of fact, although she lived to an advanced age, we know scarcely more about her than we do about her husband. She was of gentle birth, and possessed a vigorous character and a good deal of business capacity. The advantages of education were given in but slight measure to the Virginian ladies of her time, and Mrs. Washington offered no exception to the general rule. Her reading was confined to a small number of volumes, chiefly of a devotional character, her favorite apparently being Hale's "Moral and Divine Contemplations." She evidently knew no language but her own, and her spelling was extremely bad even in that age of uncertain orthography. Certain qualities, however, are clear to us even now through all the dimness. We can see that Mary Washington was gifted with strong sense, and had the power of conducting business matters providently and exactly. She was an imperious woman, of strong will, ruling her kingdom alone. Above all she was very dignified, very silent, and very sober-minded. That she was affectionate and loving cannot be doubted, for she retained to the last a profound hold upon the reverential devotion of her son, and yet as he rose steadily to the pinnacle of human greatness, she could only say that "George had been a good boy, and she was sure

he would do his duty." Not a brilliant woman evidently, not one suited to shine in courts, conduct intrigues, or adorn literature, yet able to transmit moral qualities to her oldest son, which, mingled with those of the Washingtons, were of infinite value in the foundation of a great Republic. She found herself a widow at an early age, with a family of young children to educate and support. Her means were narrow, for although Augustine Washington was able to leave what was called a landed estate to each son, it was little more than idle capital, and the income in ready money was by no means so evident as the acres.

Many are the myths, and deplorably few the facts, that have come down to us in regard to Washington's boyhood. For the former we are indebted to the illustrious Weems, and to that personage a few more words must be devoted. Weems has been held up to the present age in various ways, usually, it must be confessed, of an unflattering nature, and "mendacious" is the adjective most commonly applied to him. There has been in reality a good deal of needless confusion about Weems and his book, for he was not a complex character, and neither he nor his writings are difficult to value or understand. By profession a clergyman or preacher, by nature an adventurer, Weems loved notoriety, money, and a wandering life. So he wrote books which he correctly believed would be popular, and sold

them not only through the regular channels, but by peddling them himself as he traveled about the country. In this way he gratified all his propensities, and no doubt derived from life a good deal of simple pleasure. Chance brought him near Washington in the closing days, and his commercial instinct told him that here was the subject of all others for his pen and his market. He accordingly produced the biography which had so much success. Judged solely as literature, the book is beneath contempt. The style is turgid, overloaded, and at times silly. The statements are loose, the mode of narration confused and incoherent, and the moralizing is flat and commonplace to the last degree. Yet there was a certain sincerity of feeling underneath all the bombast and platitudes, and this saved the book. The biography did not go, and was not intended to go, into the hands of the polite society of the great eastern towns. It was meant for the farmers, the pioneers, and the backwoodsmen of the country. It went into their homes, and passed with them beyond the Alleghanies and out to the plains and valleys of the great West. The very defects of the book helped it to success among the simple, hard-working, hard-fighting race engaged in the conquest of the American continent. To them its heavy and tawdry style, its staring morals, and its real patriotism all seemed eminently befitting the national hero, and thus Weems created the Washington of the popular fancy. The

idea grew up with the country, and became so ingrained in the popular thought that finally everybody was affected by it, and even the most stately and solemn of the Washington biographers adopted the unsupported tales of the itinerant parson and book-peddler.

In regard to the public life of Washington, Weems took the facts known to every one, and drawn for the most part from the gazettes. He then dressed them up in his own peculiar fashion and gave them to the world. All this, forming of course nine tenths of his book, has passed, despite its success, into oblivion. The remaining tenth described Washington's boyhood until his fourteenth or fifteenth year, and this, which is the work of the author's imagination, has lived. Weems, having set himself up as absolutely the only authority as to this period, has been implicitly followed, and has thus come to demand serious consideration. Until Weems is weighed and disposed of, we cannot even begin an attempt to get at the real Washington.

Weems was not a cold-blooded liar, a mere forger of anecdotes. He was simply a man destitute of historical sense, training, or morals, ready to take the slenderest fact and work it up for the purposes of the market until it became almost as impossible to reduce it to its original dimensions as it was for the fisherman to get the Afrit back into his jar. In a word, Weems was an approved myth-maker. No better example can be given

than the way in which he described himself. It is believed that he preached once, and possibly oftener, to a congregation which numbered Washington among its members. Thereupon he published himself in his book as the rector of Mount Vernon parish. There was, to begin with, no such parish. There was Truro parish, in which was a church called indifferently Pohick or Mount Vernon church. Of this church Washington was a vestryman until 1785, when he joined the church at Alexandria. The Rev. Lee Massey was the clergyman of the Mount Vernon church, and the church at Alexandria had nothing to do with Mount Vernon. There never was, moreover, such a person as the rector of Mount Vernon parish, but it was the Weems way of treating his appearance before the great man, and of deceiving the world with the notion of an intimacy which the title implied.

Weems, of course, had no difficulty with the public life, but in describing the boyhood he was thrown on his own resources, and out of them he evolved the cherry-tree, the refusal to fight or permit fighting among the boys at school, and the initials in the garden. This last story is to the effect that Augustine Washington planted seeds in such a manner that when they sprouted they formed on the earth the initials of his son's name, and the boy being much delighted thereby, the father explained to him that it was the work of the Creator, and thus inculcated a profound belief

in God. This tale is taken bodily from Dr. Beattie's biographical sketch of his son, published in England in 1799, and may be dismissed at once. As to the other two more familiar anecdotes there is not a scintilla of evidence that they had any foundation, and with them may be included the colt story, told by Mr. Custis, a simple variation of the cherry-tree theme, which is Washington's early love of truth. Weems says that his stories were told him by a lady, and "a good old gentleman," who remembered the incidents, while Mr. Custis gives no authority for his minute account of a trivial event over a century old when he wrote. To a writer who invented the rector of Mount Vernon, the further invention of a couple of Boswells would be a trifle. I say Boswells advisedly, for these stories are told with the utmost minuteness, and the conversations between Washington and his father are given as if from a stenographic report. How Mr. Custis, usually so accurate, came to be so far infected with the Weems myth as to tell the colt story after the Weems manner, cannot now be determined. There can be no doubt that Washington, like most healthy boys, got into a good deal of mischief, and it is not at all impossible that he injured fruit-trees and confessed that he had done so. It may be accepted as certain that he rode and mastered many unbroken thoroughbred colts, and it is possible that one of them burst a blood-vessel in the process and died, and that the boy promptly

told his mother of the accident. But this is the utmost credit which these two anecdotes can claim. Even so much as this cannot be said of certain other improving tales of like nature. That Washington lectured his playmates on the wickedness of fighting, and in the year 1754 allowed himself to be knocked down in the presence of his soldiers, and thereupon begged his assailant's pardon for having spoken roughly to him, are stories so silly and so foolishly impossible that they do not deserve an instant's consideration.

There is nothing intrinsically impossible in either the cherry-tree or the colt incident, nor would there be in a hundred others which might be readily invented. The real point is that these stories, as told by Weems and Mr. Custis, are on their face hopelessly and ridiculously false. They are so, not merely because they have no vestige of evidence to support them, but because they are in every word and line the offspring of a period more than fifty years later. No English-speaking people, certainly no Virginians, ever thought or behaved or talked in 1740 like the personages in Weems's stories, whatever they may have done in 1790, or at the beginning of the next century. These precious anecdotes belong to the age of Miss Edgeworth and Hannah More and Jane Taylor. They are engaging specimens of the "Harry and Lucy" and "Purple Jar" morality, and accurately reflect the pale didacticism which became fashionable in England at the close of the last

century. They are as untrue to nature and to fact at the period to which they are assigned as would be efforts to depict Augustine Washington and his wife in the dress of the French revolution discussing the propriety of worshiping the Goddess of Reason.

To enter into any serious historical criticism of these stories would be to break a butterfly. So much as this even has been said only because these wretched fables have gone throughout the world, and it is time that they were swept away into the dust-heaps of history. They represent Mr. and Mrs. Washington as affected and priggish people, given to cheap moralizing, and, what is far worse, they have served to place Washington himself in a ridiculous light to an age which has outgrown the educational foibles of seventy-five years ago. Augustine Washington and his wife were a gentleman and lady of the eighteenth century, living in Virginia. So far as we know without guessing or conjecture, they were simple, honest, and straightforward, devoted to the care of their family and estate, and doing their duty sensibly and after the fashion of their time. Their son, to whom the greatest wrong has been done, not only never did anything common or mean, but from the beginning to the end of his life he was never for an instant ridiculous or affected, and he was as utterly removed from canting or priggishness as any human being could well be. Let us therefore consign the Weems stories and their offspring to

the limbo of historical rubbish, and try to learn what the plain facts tell us of the boy Washington.

Unfortunately these same facts are at first very few, so few that they tell us hardly anything. We know when and where Washington was born; and how, when he was little more than three years old,[1] he was taken from Bridges Creek to the banks of the Rappahannock. There he was placed under the charge of one Hobby, the sexton of the parish, to learn his alphabet and his pothooks; and when that worthy man's store of learning was exhausted he was sent back to Bridges Creek, soon after his father's death, to live with his half-brother Augustine, and obtain the benefits of a school kept by a Mr. Williams. There he received what would now be called a fair common-school education, wholly destitute of any instruction in languages, ancient or modern, but apparently with some mathematical training.

That he studied faithfully cannot be doubted, and we know, too, that he matured early, and was a tall, active, and muscular boy. He could outwalk and outrun and outride any of his companions. As he could no doubt have thrashed any of them too, he was, in virtue of these qualities, which are respected everywhere by all wholesome minds, and especially by boys, a leader among his

[1] There is a conflict about the period of this removal (see above, p. 37). Tradition places it in 1735, but the Rev. Mr. McGuire (*Religious Opinions of Washington*) puts it in 1739.

school-fellows. We know further that he was honest and true, and a lad of unusual promise, not because of the goody-goody anecdotes of the myth-makers, but because he was liked and trusted by such men as his brother Lawrence and Lord Fairfax.

There he was, at all events, in his fourteenth year, a big, strong, hearty boy, offering a serious problem to his mother, who was struggling along with many acres, little money, and five children. Mrs. Washington's chief desire naturally was to put George in the way of earning a living, which no doubt seemed far more important than getting an education, and, as he was a sober-minded boy, the same idea was probably profoundly impressed on his own mind also. This condition of domestic affairs led to the first attempt to give Washington a start in life, which has been given to us until very lately in a somewhat decorated form. The fact is, that in casting about for something to do, it occurred to some one, very likely to the boy himself, that it would be a fine idea to go to sea. His masculine friends and relatives urged the scheme upon Mrs. Washington, who consented very reluctantly, if at all, not liking the notion of parting with her oldest son, even in her anxiety to have him earn his bread. When it came to the point, however, she finally decided against his going, determined probably by a very sensible letter from her brother, Joseph Ball, an English lawyer. In all the ornamented versions we are

informed that the boy was to enter the royal navy, and that a midshipman's warrant was procured for him. There does not appear to be any valid authority for the royal navy, the warrant, or the midshipman. The contemporary Virginian letters speak simply of "going to sea," while Mr. Ball says distinctly that the plan was to enter the boy on a tobacco-ship, with an excellent chance of being pressed on a man-of-war, and a very faint prospect of either getting into the navy, or even rising to be the captain of one of the petty trading-vessels familiar to Virginian planters. Some recent writers have put Mr. Ball aside as not knowing what was intended in regard to his nephew, but in view of the difficulty at that time of obtaining commissions in the navy without great political influence, it seems probable that Mrs. Washington's brother knew very well what he was talking about, and he certainly wrote a very sensible letter. A bold, adventurous boy, eager to earn his living and make his way in the world, would, like many others before him, look longingly to the sea as the highway to fortune and success. To Washington the romance of the sea was represented by the tobacco-ship creeping up the river and bringing all the luxuries and many of the necessaries of life from vaguely distant countries. No doubt he wished to go on one of these vessels and try his luck, and very possibly the royal navy was hoped for as the ultimate result. The effort was certainly made to send him to sea, but

it failed, and he went back to school to study more mathematics.

Apart from the fact that the exact sciences in moderate degree were about all that Mr. Williams could teach, this branch of learning had an immediate practical value, inasmuch as surveying was almost the only immediately gainful pursuit open to a young Virginia gentleman, who sorely needed a little ready money that he might buy slaves and work a plantation. So Washington studied on for two years more, and fitted himself to be a surveyor. There are still extant some early papers belonging to this period, chiefly fragments of school exercises, which show that he already wrote the bold, handsome hand with which the world was to become familiar, and that he made geometrical figures and notes of surveys with the neatness and accuracy which clung to him in all the work of his life, whether great or small. Among those papers, too, were found many copies of legal forms, and a set of rules, over a hundred in number, as to etiquette and behavior, carefully written out. It has always been supposed that these rules were copied, but it was reserved apparently for the storms of a mighty civil war to lay bare what may have been, if not the source of the rules themselves, the origin and suggestion of their compilation. At that time a little volume was found in Virginia bearing the name of George Washington in a boyish hand on the fly-leaf, and the date

1742. The book was entitled, "The Young Man's Companion." It was an English work, and had passed through thirteen editions, which was little enough in view of its varied and extensive information. It was written by W. Mather, in a plain and easy style, and treated of arithmetic, surveying, forms for legal documents, the measuring of land and lumber, gardening, and many other useful topics, and it contained general precepts which, with the aid of Hale's "Contemplations," may readily have furnished the hints for the rules found in manuscript among Washington's papers.[1] These rules were in the main wise and sensible, and it is evident they had occupied deeply the boy's mind.[2] They are for the most part concerned with the commonplaces of etiquette and good manners, but there is something not only apt but quite prophetic in the last one, "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience." To suppose that Washington's character was formed by these sententious bits of not very profound wisdom would be absurd; but that a series of rules which most lads would have regarded as simply dull should have been written out and pondered by this boy indicates a soberness and thoughtfulness

[1] An account of this volume was given in the *New York Tribune* in 1866, and also in the *Historical Magazine* (x. 47).

[2] The most important are given in Sparks' *Writings of Washington*, ii. 412, and they may be found complete in the little pamphlet concerning them, excellently edited by Dr. J. M. Toner, of Washington.

of mind which certainly are not usual at that age. The chief thought that runs through all the sayings is to practice self-control, and no man ever displayed that most difficult of virtues to such a degree as George Washington. It was no ordinary boy who took such a lesson as this to heart before he was fifteen, and carried it into his daily life, never to be forgotten. It may also be said that very few boys ever needed it more; but those persons who know what they chiefly need, and pursue it, are by no means common.

CHAPTER III

ON THE FRONTIER

While Washington was working his way through the learning purveyed by Mr. Williams, he was also receiving another education, of a much broader and better sort, from the men and women among whom he found himself, and with whom he made friends. Chief among them was his eldest brother, Lawrence, fourteen years his senior, who had been educated in England, had fought with Vernon at Carthagena, and had then returned to Virginia, to be to him a generous father and a loving friend. As the head of the family, Lawrence Washington had received the lion's share of the property, including the estate at Hunting Creek, on the Potomac, which he christened Mount Vernon, after his admiral, and where he settled down and built him a goodly house. To this pleasant spot George Washington journeyed often in vacation time, and there he came to live and further pursue his studies, after leaving school in the autumn of 1747.

Lawrence Washington had married the daughter of William Fairfax, the proprietor of Belvoir, a neighboring plantation, and the agent for the

vast estates held by his family in Virginia. George Fairfax, Mrs. Washington's brother, had married a Miss Cary, and thus two large and agreeable family connections were thrown open to the young surveyor when he emerged from school. The chief figure, however, in that pleasant winter of 1747–48, so far as an influence upon the character of Washington is concerned, was the head of the family into which Lawrence Washington had married. Thomas, Lord Fairfax, then sixty years of age, had come to Virginia to live upon and look after the kingdom which he had inherited in the wilderness. He came of a noble and distinguished race. Graduating at Oxford with credit, he served in the army, dabbled in literature, had his fling in the London world, and was jilted by a beauty who preferred a duke, and gave her faithful but less titled lover an apparently incurable wound. His life having been thus early twisted and set awry, Lord Fairfax, when well past his prime, had determined finally to come to Virginia, bury himself in the forests, and look after the almost limitless possessions beyond the Blue Ridge, which he had inherited from his maternal grandfather, Lord Culpeper, of unsavory Restoration memory. It was a piece of great good-fortune which threw in Washington's path this accomplished gentleman, familiar with courts and camps, disappointed, but not morose, disillusioned, but still kindly and generous. From him the boy could gain that knowledge of men and manners which no school

can give, and which is as important in its way as any that a teacher can impart.

Lord Fairfax and Washington became fast friends. They hunted the fox together, and hunted him hard. They engaged in all the rough sports and perilous excitements which Virginia winter life could afford, and the boy's bold and skillful riding, his love of sports and his fine temper, commended him to the warm and affectionate interest of the old nobleman. Other qualities, too, the experienced man of the world saw in his young companion: a high and persistent courage, robust and calm sense, and, above all, unusual force of will and character. Washington impressed profoundly everybody with whom he was brought into personal contact, a fact which is one of the most marked features of his character and career, and one which deserves study more than almost any other. Lord Fairfax was no exception to the rule. He saw in Washington not simply a promising, brave, open-hearted boy, diligent in practicing his profession, and whom he was anxious to help, but something more; something which so impressed him that he confided to this lad a task which, according to its performance, would affect both his fortune and his peace. In a word, he trusted Washington, and told him, as the spring of 1748 was opening, to go forth and survey the vast Fairfax estates beyond the Ridge, define their boundaries, and save them from future litigation. With this commission from Lord Fair-

Laur. Washington

fax, Washington entered on the first period of his career. He passed it on the frontier, fighting nature, the Indians, and the French. He went in a schoolboy; he came out the first soldier in the colonies, and one of the leading men of Virginia. Let us pause a moment and look at him as he stands on the threshold of this momentous period, rightly called momentous because it was the formative period in the life of such a man.

He had just passed his sixteenth birthday. He was tall and muscular, approaching the stature of more than six feet which he afterwards attained. He was not yet filled out to manly proportions, but was rather spare, after the fashion of youth. He had a well-shaped, active figure, symmetrical except for the unusual length of the arms, indicating uncommon strength. His light brown hair was drawn back from a broad forehead, and grayish-blue eyes looked happily, and perhaps a trifle soberly, on the pleasant Virginia world about him. The face was open and manly, with a square, massive jaw, and a general expression of calmness and strength. "Fair and florid," big and strong, he was, take him for all in all, as fine a specimen of his race as could be found in the English colonies.

Let us look a little closer through the keen eyes of one who studied many faces to good purpose. The great painter of portraits, Gilbert Stuart, tells us of Washington that he never saw in any man such large eye-sockets, or such a breadth of

nose and forehead between the eyes, and that he read there the evidences of the strongest passions possible to human nature. John Bernard the actor, a good observer, too, saw in Washington's face, in 1797, the signs of an habitual conflict and mastery of passions, witnessed by the compressed mouth and deeply indented brow. The problem had been solved then; but in 1748, passion and will alike slumbered, and no man could tell which would prevail, or whether they would work together to great purpose or go jarring on to nothingness. He rises up to us out of the past in that early springtime a fine, handsome, athletic boy, beloved by those about him, who found him a charming companion and did not guess that he might be a terribly dangerous foe. He rises up instinct with life and strength, a being capable, as we know, of great things whether for good or evil, with hot blood pulsing in his veins and beating in his heart, with violent passions and relentless will still undeveloped; and no one in all that jolly, generous Virginian society even dimly dreamed what that development would be, or what it would mean to the world.

It was in March, 1748, that George Fairfax and Washington set forth on their adventures, and passing through Ashby's Gap in the Blue Ridge, entered the valley of Virginia. Thence they worked their way up the valley of the Shenandoah, surveying as they went, returned and swam the swollen Potomac, surveyed the lands

about its south branch and in the mountainous region of Frederick County, and finally reached Mount Vernon again on April 12. It was a rough experience for a beginner, but a wholesome one, and furnished the usual vicissitudes of frontier life. They were wet, cold, and hungry, or warm, dry, and well fed, by turns. They slept in a tent, or the huts of the scattered settlers, and oftener still beneath the stars. They met a war party of Indians, and having plied them with liquor, watched one of their mad dances round the camp-fire. In another place they came on a straggling settlement of Germans, dull, patient, and illiterate, strangely unfit for the life of the wilderness. All these things, as well as the progress of their work and their various resting-places, Washington noted down briefly but methodically in a diary, showing in these rough notes the first evidences of that keen observation of nature and men and of daily incidents which he developed to such good purpose in after-life. There are no rhapsodies and no reflections in these hasty jottings, but the employments and the discomforts are all set down in a simple and matter-of-fact way, which omitted no essential thing and excluded all that was worthless. His work, too, was well done, and Lord Fairfax was so much pleased by the report that he moved across the Blue Ridge, built a hunting lodge preparatory to something more splendid which never came to pass, and laid out a noble manor, to which he

gave the name of Greenway Court. He also procured for Washington an appointment as a public surveyor, which conferred authority on his surveys and provided him with regular work. Thus started, Washington toiled at his profession for three years, living and working as he did on his first expedition. It was a rough life, but a manly and robust one, and the men who live it, although often rude and coarse, are never weak or effeminate. To Washington it was an admirable school. It strengthened his muscles and hardened him to exposure and fatigue. It accustomed him to risks and perils of various kinds, and made him fertile in expedients and confident of himself, while the nature of his work rendered him careful and industrious. That his work was well done is shown by the fact that his surveys were considered of the first authority, and stand unquestioned to this day, like certain other work which he was subsequently called to do. It was part of his character, when he did anything, to do it in a lasting fashion, and it is worth while to remember that the surveys he made as a boy were the best that could be made.

He wrote to a friend at this time: "Since you received my letter of October last, I have not slept above three or four nights in a bed, but, after walking a good deal all the day, I have lain down before the fire upon a little hay, straw, fodder, or a bearskin, whichever was to be had, with man, wife, and children, like dogs and cats; and happy is he who gets the berth nearest the fire.

Nothing would make it pass off tolerably but a good reward. A doubloon is my constant gain every day that the weather will permit of my going out, and sometimes six pistoles." He was evidently a thrifty lad, and honestly pleased with honest earnings. He was no mere adventurous wanderer, but a man working for results in money, reputation, or some solid value, and while he worked and earned he kept an observant eye upon the wilderness, and bought up when he could the best land for himself and his family, laying the foundations of the great landed estate of which he died possessed.

There was also a lighter and pleasanter side to this hard-working existence, which was quite as useful, and more attractive, than toiling in the woods and mountains. The young surveyor passed much of his time at Greenway Court, hunting the fox and rejoicing in all field sports which held high place in that kingdom, while at the same time he profited much in graver fashion by his friendship with such a man as Lord Fairfax. There, too, he had a chance at a library, and his diaries show that he read carefully the history of England and the essays of the "Spectator." Neither in early days nor at any other time was he a student, for he had few opportunities, and his life from the beginning was out of doors and among men. But the idea sometimes put forward that Washington cared nothing for reading or for books is an idle one. He read at Greenway Court

and everywhere else when he had an opportunity. He read well, too, and to some purpose, studying men and events in books as he did in the world, for though he never talked of his reading, preserving silence on that as on other things concerning himself, no one ever was able to record an instance in which he showed himself ignorant of history or of literature. He was never a learned man, but so far as his own language could carry him he was an educated one. Thus while he developed the sterner qualities by hard work and a rough life, he did not bring back the coarse habits of the backwoods and the camp-fire, but was able to refine his manners and improve his mind in the excellent society and under the hospitable roof of Lord Fairfax.

Three years slipped by, and then a domestic change came which much affected Washington's whole life. The Carthagena campaign had undermined the strength of Lawrence Washington and sown the seeds of consumption, which showed itself in 1749, and became steadily more alarming. A voyage to England and a summer at the warm springs were tried without success, and finally, as a last resort, the invalid sailed for the West Indies, in September, 1751. Thither his brother George accompanied him, and we have the fragments of a diary kept during this first and last wandering outside his native country. He copied the log, noted the weather, and evidently strove to get some idea of nautical matters

while he was at sea and leading a life strangely unfamiliar to a woodsman and pioneer. When they arrived at their destination they were immediately asked to breakfast and dine with Major Clarke, the military magnate of the place, and our young Virginian remarked, with characteristic prudence and a certain touch of grim humor, "We went, — myself with some reluctance, as the smallpox was in the family." He fell a victim to his good manners, for two weeks later he was "strongly attacked with the smallpox," and was then housed for a month, getting safely and successfully through this dangerous and then almost universal ordeal. Before the disease declared itself, however, he went about everywhere, innocently scattering infection, and greatly enjoying the pleasures of the island. It is to be regretted that any part of this diary should have been lost, for it is pleasant reading, and exhibits the writer in an agreeable and characteristic fashion. He commented on the country and the scenery, inveighed against the extravagance of the charges for board and lodging, told of his dinner-parties and his friends, and noted the marvelous abundance and variety of the tropical fruits, which contrasted strangely with the British dishes of beefsteak and tripe. He also mentioned being treated to a ticket to see the play of "George Barnwell," on which he offered this cautious criticism: "The character of Barnwell and several others were said to be well performed. There was music adapted and regularly conducted."

Soon after his recovery Washington returned to Virginia, arriving there in February, 1752. The diary concluded with a brief but perfectly effective description of Barbadoes, touching on its resources and scenery, its government and condition, and the manners and customs of its inhabitants. All through these notes we find the keenly observant spirit, and the evidence of a mind constantly alert to learn. We see also a pleasant, happy temperament, enjoying with hearty zest all the pleasures that youth and life could furnish. He who wrote these lines was evidently a vigorous, good-humored young fellow, with a quick eye for the world opening before him, and for the delights as well as the instruction which it offered.

From the sunshine and ease of this tropical winter Washington passed to a long season of trial and responsibility at home and abroad. In July, 1752, his much-loved brother Lawrence died, leaving George guardian of his daughter, and heir to his estates in the event of that daughter's death. Thus the current of his home life changed, and responsibility came into it, while outside the mighty stream of public events changed too, and swept him along in the swelling torrent of a world-wide war.

In all the vast wilderness beyond the mountains there was not room for both French and English. The rival nations had been for years slowly approaching each other, until in 1749 each peo-

ple proceeded at last to take possession of the Ohio country after its own fashion. The French sent a military expedition which sank and nailed up leaden plates; the English formed a great land company to speculate and make money, and both set diligently to work to form Indian alliances. A man of far less perception than Lawrence Washington, who had become the chief manager of the Ohio Company, would have seen that the conditions on the frontier rendered war inevitable, and he accordingly made ready for the future by preparing his brother for the career of a soldier, so far as it could be done. He brought to Mount Vernon two old companions-in-arms of the Carthagena time, Adjutant Muse, a Virginian, and Jacob Van Braam, a Dutch soldier of fortune. The former instructed Washington in the art of war, tactics, and the manual of arms, the latter in fencing and the sword exercise. At the same time Lawrence Washington procured for his brother, then only nineteen years of age, an appointment as one of the adjutants-general of Virginia, with the rank of major. To all this the young surveyor took kindly enough so far as we can tell, but his military avocations were interrupted by his voyage to Barbadoes, by the illness and death of his brother, and by the cares and responsibilities thereby thrust upon him.

Meantime the French aggressions had continued, and French soldiers and traders were working their way up from the South and down from

the North, bullying and cajoling the Indians by turns, taking possession of the Ohio country, and selecting places as they went for that chain of forts which was to hem in and slowly strangle the English settlements. Governor Dinwiddie had sent a commissioner to remonstrate against these encroachments, but his envoy had stopped a hundred and fifty miles short of the French posts, alarmed by the troublous condition of things, and by the defeat and slaughter which the Frenchmen had already inflicted upon the Indians. Some more vigorous person was evidently needed to go through the form of warning France not to trespass on the English wilderness, and thereupon Governor Dinwiddie selected for the task George Washington, recently reappointed adjutant-general of the northern division, and major in the Virginian forces. He was a young man for such an undertaking, not yet twenty-two, but clearly of good reputation. It is plain enough that Lord Fairfax and others had said to the governor, "Here is the very man for you; young, daring, and adventurous, but yet sober-minded and responsible, who only lacks opportunity to show the stuff that is in him."

Thus, then, in October, 1753, Washington set forth with Van Braam, and various servants and horses, accompanied by the boldest of Virginian frontiersmen, Christopher Gist. He wrote a report in the form of a journal, which was sent to England and much read at the time as part of the

news of the day, and which has an equal although different interest now. It is a succinct, clear, and sober narrative. The little party was formed at Will's Creek, and thence through woods and over swollen rivers made its way to Logstown. Here they spent some days among the Indians, whose leaders Washington got within his grasp after much speech-making; and here, too, he met some French deserters from the South, and drew from them all the knowledge they possessed of New Orleans and the military expeditions from that region. From Logstown he pushed on, accompanied by his Indian chiefs, to Venango, on the Ohio, the first French outpost. The French officers asked him to sup with them. The wine flowed freely, the tongues of the hosts were loosened, and the young Virginian, temperate and hard-headed, listened to all the conversation, and noted down mentally much that was interesting and valuable. The next morning the Indian chiefs, prudently kept in the background, appeared, and a struggle ensued between the talkative, clever Frenchmen and the quiet, persistent Virginian, over the possession of these important savages. Finally Washington got off, carrying his chiefs with him, and made his way seventy miles further to the fort on French Creek. Here he delivered the governor's letter, and while M. de St. Pierre wrote a vague and polite answer, he sketched the fort and informed himself in regard to the military condition of the post. Then came another

struggle over the Indians, and finally Washington got off with them once more, and worked his way back to Venango. Another struggle for the savages followed, rum being always the principal factor in the negotiation, and at last the chiefs determined to stay behind. Nevertheless, the work had been well done, and the important Half-King remained true to the English cause.

Leaving his horses, Washington and Gist then took to the woods on foot. The French Indians lay in wait for them and tried to murder them, and Gist, like a true frontiersman, was for shooting the scoundrel whom they captured. But Washington stayed his hand, and they gave the savage the slip and pressed on. It was the middle of December, very cold and stormy. In crossing a river, Washington fell from the raft into deep water, amid the floating ice, but fought his way out, and he and his companion passed the night on an island, with their clothes frozen upon them. So through peril and privation, and various dangers, stopping in the midst of it all to win another savage potentate, they reached the edge of the settlements and thence went on to Williamsburg, where great praise and glory were awarded to the youthful envoy, the hero of the hour in the little Virginia capital.

It is worth while to pause over this expedition a moment and to consider attentively this journal which recounts it, for there are very few incidents or documents which tell us more of Washington.

He was not yet twenty-two when he faced this first grave responsibility, and he did his work absolutely well. Cool courage, of course, he showed, but also patience and wisdom in handling the Indians, a clear sense that the crafty and well-trained Frenchmen could not blind, and a strong faculty for dealing with men, always a rare and precious gift. As in the little Barbadoes diary, so also in this journal, we see, and far more strongly, the penetration and perception that nothing could escape, and which set down all things essential and let the "huddling silver, little worth," go by. The clearness, terseness, and entire sufficiency of the narrative are obvious and lie on the surface; but we find also another quality of the man which is one of the most marked features in his character, and one which we must dwell upon again and again, as we follow the story of his life. Here it is that we learn directly for the first time that Washington was a profoundly silent man. The gospel of silence has been preached in these latter days by Carlyle, with the fervor of a seer and prophet, and the world owes him a debt for the historical discredit which he has brought upon the man of mere words as compared with the man of deeds. Carlyle brushed Washington aside as "a bloodless Cromwell," a phrase to which we must revert later on other grounds, and, as has already been said, failed utterly to see that he was the most supremely silent of the great men of action that the world can show.

Like Cromwell and Frederic, Washington wrote countless letters, made many speeches, and was agreeable in conversation. But this was all in the way of business, and a man may be profoundly silent and yet talk a great deal. Silence in the fine and true sense is neither mere holding of the tongue nor an incapacity of expression. The greatly silent man is he who is not given to words for their own sake, and who never talks about himself. Both Cromwell, greatest of Englishmen, and the great Frederic, Carlyle's especial heroes, were fond of talking of themselves. So in still larger measure was Napoleon, and many others of less importance. But Washington differs from them all. He had abundant power of words, and could use them with much force and point when he was so minded, but he never used them needlessly or to hide his meaning, and he never talked about himself. Hence the inestimable difficulty of knowing him. A brief sentence here and there, a rare gleam of light across the page of a letter, is all that we can find. The rest is silence. He did as great work as has fallen to the lot of man, he wrote volumes of correspondence, he talked with innumerable men and women, and of himself he said nothing. Here in this youthful journal we have a narrative of wild adventure, wily diplomacy, and personal peril, impossible of condensation, and yet not a word of the writer's thoughts or feelings. All that was done or said important to the business in hand was set down, and nothing

was overlooked, but that is all. The work was done, and we know how it was done, but the man is silent as to all else. Here, indeed, is the man of action and of real silence, a character to be much admired and wondered at in these or any other days.

Washington's report looked like war, and its author was shortly afterwards appointed lieutenant-colonel of a Virginian regiment, Colonel Fry commanding. Now began that long experience of human stupidity and inefficiency with which Washington was destined to struggle through all the years of his military career, suffering from them, and triumphing in spite of them to a degree unequaled by any other great commander. Dinwiddie, the Scotch governor, was eager enough to fight, and full of energy and good intentions, but he was hasty and not overwise, and was filled with an excessive idea of his prerogatives. The assembly, on its side, was sufficiently patriotic, but its members came from a community which for more than half a century had had no fighting, and they knew nothing of war or its necessities. Unaccustomed to the large affairs into which they were suddenly plunged, they displayed a narrow and provincial spirit. Keenly alive to their own rights and privileges, they were more occupied in quarreling with Dinwiddie than in prosecuting the war. In the weak proprietary governments of Maryland and Pennsylvania there was the same condition of affairs, with every evil exaggerated

tenfold. The fighting spirit was dominant in Virginia, but in Quaker-ridden Pennsylvania it seems to have been almost extinct. These three were not very promising communities to look to for support in a difficult and costly war.

With all this inertia and stupidity Washington was called to cope, and he rebelled against it in vigorous fashion. Leaving Colonel Fry to follow with the main body of troops, Washington set out on April 2, 1754, with two companies from Alexandria, where he had been recruiting amidst most irritating difficulties. He reached Will's Creek three weeks later; and then his real troubles began. Captain Trent, the timid and halting envoy, who had failed to reach the French, had been sent out by the wise authorities to build a fort at the junction of the Alleghany and Monongahela, on the admirable site selected by the keen eye of Washington. There Trent left his men and returned to Will's Creek, where Washington found him, but without the pack-horses that he had promised to provide. Presently news came that the French in overwhelming numbers had swept down upon Trent's little party, captured their fort, and sent them packing back to Virginia. Washington took this to be war, and determined at once to march against the enemy. Having impressed from the inhabitants, who were not bubbling over with patriotism, some horses and wagons, he set out on his toilsome march across the mountains.

It was a wild and desolate region, and progress was extremely slow. By May 9 he was at the Little Meadows, twenty miles from his starting-place; by the 18th at the Youghiogany River, which he explored and found unnavigable. He was therefore forced to take up his weary march again for the Monongahela, and by the 27th he was at the Great Meadows, a few miles further on. The extreme danger of his position does not seem to have occurred to him, but he was harassed and angered by the conduct of the assembly. He wrote to Governor Dinwiddie that he had no idea of giving up his commission. "But," he continued, "let me serve voluntarily; then I will, with the greatest pleasure in life, devote my services to the expedition, without any other reward than the satisfaction of serving my country; but to be slaving dangerously for the shadow of pay, through woods, rocks, mountains, — I would rather prefer the great toil of a daily laborer, and dig for a maintenance, provided I were reduced to the necessity, than serve upon such ignoble terms; for I really do not see why the lives of his Majesty's subjects in Virginia should be of less value than those in other parts of his American dominions, especially when it is well known that we must undergo double their hardship." Here we have a high-spirited, high-tempered young gentleman, with a contempt for shams that it is pleasant to see, and evidently endowed also with a fine taste for fighting and not too much patience.

Indignant letters written in vigorous language were, however, of little avail, and Washington prepared to shift for himself as best he might. His Indian allies brought him news that the French were on the march and had thrown out scouting parties. Picking out a place in the Great Meadows for a fort, "a charming field for an encounter," he in his turn sent out a scouting party, and then on fresh intelligence from the Indians set forth himself with forty men to find the enemy. After a toilsome march they discovered their foes in camp. The French, surprised and surrounded, sprang to arms, the Virginians fired, there was a sharp exchange of shots, and all was over. Ten of the French were killed and twenty-one were taken prisoners, only one of the party escaping to carry back the news.

This little skirmish made a prodigious noise in its day, and was much heralded in France. The French declared that Jumonville, the leader, who fell at the first fire, was foully assassinated, and that he and his party were ambassadors and sacred characters. Paris rang with this fresh instance of British perfidy, and a M. Thomas celebrated the luckless Jumonville in a solemn epic poem in four books. French historians, relying on the account of the Canadian who escaped, adopted the same tone, and at a later day mourned over this black spot on Washington's character. The French view was simple nonsense. Jumonville and his party, as the papers found on Jumonville showed,

were out on a spying and scouting expedition. They were seeking to surprise the English when the English surprised them, with the usual backwoods result. The affair has a dramatic interest because it was the first blood shed in a great struggle, and was the beginning of a series of world-wide wars and social and political convulsions, which terminated more than half a century later on the plains of Waterloo. It gave immortality to an obscure French officer by linking his name with that of his opponent, and brought Washington for the moment before the eyes of the world, which little dreamed that this Virginian colonel was destined to be one of the principal figures in the great revolutionary drama to which the war then beginning was but the prologue.

Washington, for his part, well satisfied with his exploit, retraced his steps, and having sent his prisoners back to Virginia, proceeded to consider his situation. It was not a very cheerful prospect. Contrecœur, with the main body of the French and Indians, was moving down from the Monongahela a thousand strong. This of course was to have been anticipated, and it does not seem to have in the least damped Washington's spirits. His blood was up, his fighting temper thoroughly roused, and he prepared to push on. Colonel Fry had died meanwhile, leaving Washington in command; but his troops came forward, and also not long after a useless "independent" company from South Carolina. Thus

reinforced Washington advanced painfully some thirteen miles, and then receiving sure intelligence of the approach of the French in great force fell back with difficulty to the Great Meadows, where he was obliged by the exhausted condition of his men to stop. He at once resumed work on Fort Necessity, and made ready for a desperate defense, for the French were on his heels, and on July 3 appeared at the Meadows. Washington offered battle outside the fort, and this being declined withdrew to his trenches, and skirmishing went on all day. When night fell it was apparent that the end had come. The men were starved and worn out. Their muskets in many cases were rendered useless by the rain, and their ammunition was spent. The Indians had deserted, and the foe outnumbered them four to one. When the French therefore offered a parley, Washington was forced reluctantly to accept. The French had no stomach for the fight, apparently, and allowed the English to go with their arms, exacting nothing but a pledge that for a year they would not come to the Ohio.

So ended Washington's first campaign. His friend the Half-King, the celebrated Seneca chief, Thanacarishon, who prudently departed on the arrival of the French, has left us a candid opinion of Washington and his opponents. "The colonel," he said, "was a good-natured man, but had no experience; he took upon him to command the Indians as his slaves, and would have them

every day upon the scout and to attack the enemy by themselves, but would by no means take advice from the Indians. He lay in one place from one full moon to the other, without making any fortifications, except that little thing on the meadow; whereas, had he taken advice, and built such fortifications as I advised him, he might easily have beat off the French. But the French in the engagement acted like cowards, and the English like fools."[1]

There is a deal of truth in this opinion. The whole expedition was rash in the extreme. When Washington left Will's Creek he was aware that he was going to meet a force of a thousand men with only a hundred and fifty raw recruits at his back. In the same spirit he pushed on; and after the Jumonville affair, although he knew that the wilderness about him was swarming with enemies, he still struggled forward. When forced to retreat he made a stand at the Meadows and offered battle in the open to his more numerous and more prudent foes, for he was one of those men who by nature regard courage as a substitute for everything, and who have a contempt for hostile odds. He was ready to meet any number of French and Indians with cheerful confidence and with real pleasure. He wrote, in a letter which soon became famous, that he loved to hear bullets

[1] *Enquiry into the Causes and Alienations of the Delaware and Shawanee Indians*, etc. London, 1759. By Charles Thomson, afterwards Secretary of Congress.

whistle, a sage observation which he set down in later years as a folly of youth. Yet this boyish outburst, foolish as it was, has a meaning to us, for it was essentially true. Washington had the fierce fighting temper of the Northmen. He loved battle and danger, and he never ceased to love them and to give way to their excitement, although he did not again set down such sentiments in boastful phrase that made the world laugh. Men of such temper, moreover, are naturally imperious and have a fine disregard of consequences, with the result that their allies, Indian or otherwise, often become impatient and finally useless. The campaign was perfectly wild from the outset, and if it had not been for the utter indifference to danger displayed by Washington, and the consequent timidity of the French, that particular body of Virginians would have been permanently lost to the British Empire.

But we learn from all this many things. It appears that Washington was not merely a brave man, but one who loved fighting for its own sake. The whole expedition shows an arbitrary temper and the most reckless courage, valuable qualities, but here unrestrained, and mixed with very little prudence. Some important lessons were learned by Washington from the rough teachings of inexorable and unconquerable facts. He received in this campaign the first taste of that severe experience which by its training developed the self-control and mastery of temper for which he became

so remarkable. He did not spring into life a perfect and impossible man, as is so often represented. On the contrary, he was educated by circumstances; but the metal came out of the furnace of experience finely tempered, because it was by nature of the best and with but little dross to be purged away. In addition to all this he acquired for the moment what would now be called a European reputation. He was known in Paris as an assassin, and in England, thanks to the bullet letter, as a "fanfaron" and brave braggart. With these results he wended his way home much depressed in spirits, but not in the least discouraged, and fonder of fighting than ever.

Virginia, however, took a kinder view of the campaign than did her defeated soldier. She appreciated the gallantry of the offer to fight in the open and the general conduct of the troops, and her House of Burgesses passed a vote of thanks to Washington and his officers, and gave money to his men. In August he rejoined his regiment, only to renew the vain struggle against incompetence and extravagance, and as if this were not enough, his sense of honor was wounded and his temper much irritated by the governor's playing false to the prisoners taken in the Jumonville fight. While thus engaged, news came that the French were off their guard at Fort Duquesne, and Dinwiddie was for having the regiment of undisciplined troops march again into the wilderness. Washington, however, had learned some-

thing, if not a great deal, and he demonstrated the folly of such an attempt in a manner too clear to be confuted.

Meantime the Burgesses came together, and more money being voted, Dinwiddie hit on a notable plan for quieting dissensions between regulars and provincials by dividing all the troops into independent companies, with no officer higher than a captain. Washington, the only officer who had seen fighting and led a regiment, resented quite properly this senseless policy, and resigning his commission withdrew to Mount Vernon to manage the estate and attend to his own affairs. He was driven to this course still more strongly by the original cause of Dinwiddie's arrangement. The English government had issued an order that officers holding the king's commission should rank provincial officers, and that provincial generals and field officers should have no rank when a general or field officer holding a royal commission was present. The degradation of being ranked by every whipper-snapper who might hold a royal commission by virtue, perhaps, of being the bastard son of some nobleman's cast-off mistress was more than the temper of George Washington at least could bear, and when Governor Sharpe, general by the king's commission, and eager to secure the services of the best fighter in Virginia, offered him a company and urged his acceptance, he replied in language that must have somewhat astonished his excellency. "You make mention in

your letter," he wrote to Colonel Fitzhugh, Governor Sharpe's second in command, "of my continuing in the service, and retaining my colonel's commission. This idea has filled me with surprise; for, if you think me capable of holding a commission that has neither rank nor emolument annexed to it, you must entertain a very contemptible opinion of my weakness, and believe me to be more empty than the commission itself. . . . In short, every captain bearing the king's commission, every half-pay officer, or others appearing with such a commission, would rank before me. . . . Yet my inclinations are strongly bent to arms."

It was a bitter disappointment to withdraw from military life, but Washington had an intense sense of personal dignity; not the small vanity of a petty mind, but the quality of a proud man conscious of his own strength and purpose. It was of immense value to the American people at a later day, and there is something very instructive in this early revolt against the stupid arrogance which England has always thought it wise to display toward this country. She has paid dearly for indulging it, but it has seldom cost her more than when it drove Washington from her service, and left in his mind a sense of indignity and injustice.

Meantime this Virginian campaigning had started a great movement. England was aroused, and it was determined to assail France in Nova

Scotia, from New York and on the Ohio. In accordance with this plan General Braddock arrived in Virginia February 20, 1755, with two picked regiments, and encamped at Alexandria. Thither Washington used to ride and look longingly at the pomp and glitter, and wish that he were engaged in the service. Presently this desire became known, and Braddock, hearing of the young Virginian's past experience, offered him a place on his staff with the rank of colonel where he would be subject only to the orders of the general, and could serve as a volunteer. He therefore accepted at once, and threw himself into his new duties with hearty good-will. Every step now was full of instruction. At Annapolis he met the governors of the other colonies, and was interested and attracted by this association with distinguished public men. In the army to which he was attached he studied with the deepest attention the best discipline of Europe, observing everything and forgetting nothing, thus preparing himself unconsciously to use against his teachers the knowledge he acquired.

He also made warm friends with the English officers, and was treated with consideration by his commander. The universal practice of all Englishmen at that time was to behave contemptuously to the colonists, but there was something about Washington which made this impossible. They all treated him with the utmost courtesy, vaguely conscious that beneath the pleasant, quiet manner

there was a strength of character and ability such as is rarely found, and that this was a man whom it was unsafe to affront. There is no stronger instance of Washington's power of impressing himself upon others than that he commanded now the respect and affection of his general, who was the last man to be easily or favorably affected by a young provincial officer.

Edward Braddock was a veteran soldier, a skilled disciplinarian, and a rigid martinet. He was narrow-minded, brutal, and brave. He had led a fast life in society, indulging in coarse and violent dissipations, and was proud with the intense pride of a limited intelligence and a nature incapable of physical fear. It would be difficult to conceive of a man more unfit to be entrusted with the task of marching through the wilderness and sweeping the French from the Ohio. All the conditions which confronted him were unfamiliar and beyond his experience. He cordially despised the provincials who were essential to his success, and lost no opportunity of showing his contempt for them. The colonists on their side, especially in Pennsylvania, gave him, unfortunately, only too much ground for irritation and disgust. They were delighted to see this brilliant force come from England to fight their battles, but they kept on wrangling and holding back, refusing money and supplies, and doing nothing. Braddock chafed and delayed, swore angrily, and lingered still. Washington strove to help him, but defended his

country fearlessly against wholesale and furious attacks.

Finally the army began to move, but so slowly and after so much delay that they did not reach Will's Creek until the middle of May. Here came another exasperating pause, relieved only by Franklin, who, by giving his own time, ability, and money, supplied the necessary wagons. Then they pushed on again, but with the utmost slowness. With supreme difficulty they made an elaborate road over the mountains as they marched, and did not reach the Little Meadows until June 16. Then at last Braddock turned to his young aide for the counsel which had already been proffered and rejected many times. Washington advised the division of the army, so that the main body could hurry forward in light marching order while a detachment remained behind and brought up the heavy baggage. This plan was adopted, and the army started forward, still too heavily burdened, as Washington thought, but in somewhat better trim for the wilderness than before. Their progress, quickened as it was, still seemed slow to Washington, but he was taken ill with a fever, and finally was compelled by Braddock to stop for rest at the ford of Youghiogany. He made Braddock promise that he should be brought up before the army reached Fort Duquesne, and wrote to his friend Orme that he would not miss the impending battle for five hundred pounds.

As soon as his fever abated a little he left Colo-

nel Dunbar, and, being unable to sit on a horse, was conveyed to the front in a wagon, coming up with the army on July 8. He was just in time, for the next day the troops forded the Monongahela and marched to attack the fort. The splendid appearance of the soldiers as they crossed the river roused Washington's enthusiasm; but he was not without misgivings. Franklin had already warned Braddock against the danger of surprise, and had been told with a sneer that while these savages might be a formidable enemy to raw American militia, they could make no impression on disciplined troops. Now at the last moment Washington warned the general again and was angrily rebuked.

The troops marched on in ordered ranks, glittering and beautiful. Suddenly firing was heard in the front, and presently the van was flung back on the main body. Yells and war-whoops resounded on every side, and an unseen enemy poured in a deadly fire. Washington begged Braddock to throw his men into the woods, but all in vain. Fight in platoons they must, or not at all. The result was that they did not fight at all. They became panic-stricken, and huddled together, overcome with fear, until at last when Braddock was mortally wounded they broke in wild rout and fled. Of the regular troops, seven hundred, and of the officers, who showed the utmost bravery, sixty-two out of eighty-six, were killed or wounded. Two hundred Frenchmen and

six hundred Indians achieved this signal victory. The only thing that could be called fighting on the English side was done by the Virginians, "the raw American militia," who, spread out as skirmishers, met their foes on their own ground, and were cut off after a desperate resistance almost to a man.

Washington at the outset flung himself headlong into the fight. He rode up and down the field, carrying orders and striving to rally "the dastards," as he afterwards called the regular troops. He endeavored to bring up the artillery, but the men would not serve the guns, although to set an example he aimed and discharged one himself. All through that dreadful carnage he rode fiercely about, raging with the excitement of battle, and utterly exposed from beginning to end. Even now it makes the heart beat quicker to think of him amid the smoke and slaughter as he dashed hither and thither, his face glowing and his eyes shining with the fierce light of battle, leading on his own Virginians, and trying to stay the tide of disaster. He had two horses shot under him and four bullets through his coat. The Indians thought he bore a charmed life, while his death was reported in the colonies, together with his dying speech, which, he dryly wrote to his brother, he had not yet composed.

When the troops broke it was Washington who gathered the fugitives and brought off the dying general. It was he who rode on to meet Dunbar,

and rallying the fugitives enabled the wretched remnants to take up their march for the settlements. He it was who laid Braddock in the grave four days after the defeat, and read over the dead the solemn words of the English service. Wise, sensible, and active in the advance, splendidly reckless on the day of battle, cool and collected on the retreat, Washington alone emerged from that history of disaster with added glory. Again he comes before us as, above all things, the fighting man, hot-blooded and fierce in action, and utterly indifferent to the danger which excited and delighted him. But the earlier lesson had not been useless. He now showed a prudence and wisdom in counsel which were not apparent in the first of his campaigns, and he no longer thought that mere courage was all-sufficient, or that any enemy could be despised. He was plainly one of those who could learn. His first experience had borne good fruit, and now he had been taught a series of fresh and valuable lessons. Before his eyes had been displayed the most brilliant European discipline, both in camp and on the march. He had studied and absorbed it all, talking with veterans and hearing from them many things that he could have acquired nowhere else. Once more had he been taught, in a way not to be forgotten, that it is never well to underrate one's opponent. He had looked deeper, too, and had seen what the whole continent soon understood, that English troops were not invincible, that they could be

beaten by Indians, and that they were after all much like other men. This was the knowledge, fatal in after days to British supremacy, which Braddock's defeat brought to Washington and to the colonists, and which was never forgotten. Could he have looked into the future, he would have seen also in this ill-fated expedition an epitome of much future history. The expedition began with stupid contempt toward America and all things American, and ended in ruin and defeat. It was a bitter experience, much heeded by the colonists, but disregarded by England, whose indifference was paid for at a heavy cost.

After the hasty retreat, Colonel Dunbar, stricken with panic, fled onward to Philadelphia, abandoning everything, and Virginia was left naturally in a state of great alarm. The assembly came together, and at last, thoroughly frightened, voted abundant money, and ordered a regiment of a thousand men to be raised. Washington, who had returned to Mount Vernon ill and worn-out, was urged to solicit the command, but it was not his way to solicit, and he declined to do so now. August 14, he wrote to his mother: "If it is in my power to avoid going to the Ohio again, I shall; but if the command is pressed upon me by the general voice of the country, and offered upon such terms as cannot be objected against, it would reflect dishonor on me to refuse it." The same day he was offered the command of all the Virginian forces on his own terms, and accepted.

Virginia believed in Washington, and he was ready to obey her call.

He at once assumed command and betook himself to Winchester, a general without an army, but still able to check by his presence the existing panic, and ready to enter upon the trying, dreary, and fruitless work that lay before him. In April, 1757, he wrote: "I have been posted then, for more than twenty months past, upon our cold and barren frontiers, to perform, I think I may say, impossibilities; that is, to protect from the cruel incursions of a crafty, savage enemy a line of inhabitants, of more than three hundred and fifty miles in extent, with a force inadequate to the task." This terse statement covers all that can be said of the next three years. It was a long struggle against a savage foe in front, and narrowness, jealousy, and stupidity behind; apparently without any chance of effecting anything, or gaining any glory or reward. Troops were voted, but were raised with difficulty, and when raised were neglected and ill-treated by the wrangling governor and assembly, which caused much ill-suppressed wrath in the breast of the commander-in-chief, who labored day and night to bring about better discipline in camp, and who wrote long letters to Williamsburg recounting existing evils and praying for a new militia law.

The troops, in fact, were got out with vast difficulty even under the most stinging necessity, and were almost worthless when they came. Of one

"noble captain" who refused to come, Washington wrote: "With coolness and moderation this great captain answered that his wife, family, and corn were all at stake; so were those of his soldiers; therefore it was impossible for him to come. Such is the example of the officers; such the behavior of the men; and upon such circumstances depends the safety of our country!" But while the soldiers were neglected, and the assembly faltered, and the militia disobeyed, the French and Indians kept at work on the long, exposed frontier. There panic reigned, farmhouses and villages went up in smoke, and the fields were reddened with slaughter at each fresh incursion. Gentlemen in Williamsburg bore these misfortunes with reasonable fortitude, but Washington raged against the abuses and the inaction, and vowed that nothing but the imminent danger prevented his resignation. "The supplicating tears of the women," he wrote, "and moving petitions of the men melt me into such deadly sorrow that I solemnly declare, if I know my own mind, I could offer myself a willing sacrifice to the butchering enemy, provided that would contribute to the people's ease." This is one of the rare flashes of personal feeling which disclose the real man, warm of heart and temper, full of human sympathy, and giving vent to hot indignation in words which still ring clear and strong across the century that has come and gone.

Serious troubles, moreover, were complicated

by petty annoyances. A Maryland captain, at the head of thirty men, undertook to claim rank over the Virginian commander-in-chief because he had held a king's commission; and Washington was obliged to travel to Boston in order to have the miserable thing set right by Governor Shirley. This affair settled, he returned to take up again the old disheartening struggle, and his outspoken condemnation of Dinwiddie's foolish schemes and of the shortcomings of the government began to raise up backbiters and malcontents at Williamsburg. "My orders," he said, "are dark, doubtful, and uncertain; to-day approved, to-morrow condemned. Left to act and proceed at hazard, accountable for the consequences, and blamed without the benefit of defense." He determined nevertheless to bear with his trials until the arrival of Lord Loudon, the new commander-in-chief, from whom he expected vigor and improvement. Unfortunately he was destined to have only fresh disappointment from the new general, for Lord Loudon was merely one more incompetent man added to the existing confusion. He paid no heed to the South, matters continued to go badly in the North, and Virginia was left helpless. So Washington toiled on with much discouragement, and the disagreeable attacks upon him increased. That it should have been so is not surprising, for he wrote to the governor, who now held him in much disfavor, to the speaker, and indeed to every one, with a most galling plainness. He was only

twenty-five, be it remembered, and his high temper was by no means under perfect control. He was anything but diplomatic at that period of his life, and was far from patient, using language with much sincerity and force, and indulging in a blunt irony of rather a ferocious kind. When he was accused finally of getting up reports of imaginary dangers, his temper gave way entirely. He wrote wrathfully to the governor for justice, and added in a letter to his friend, Captain Peachey: "As to Colonel C.'s gross and infamous reflections on my conduct last spring, it will be needless, I dare say, to observe further at this time than that the liberty which he has been pleased to allow himself in sporting with my character is little else than a comic entertainment, discovering at one view his passionate fondness for your friend, his inviolable love of truth, his unfathomable knowledge, and the masterly strokes of his wisdom in displaying it. You are heartily welcome to make use of any letter or letters which I may at any time have written to you; for although I keep no copies of epistles to my friends, nor can remember the contents of all of them, yet I am sensible that the narrations are just, and that truth and honesty will appear in my writings; of which, therefore, I shall not be ashamed, though criticism may censure my style."

Perhaps a little more patience would have produced better results, but it is pleasant to find one man, in that period of stupidity and incompetency,

who was ready to free his mind in this refreshing way. The only wonder is that he was not driven from his command. That they insisted on keeping him there shows beyond everything that he had already impressed himself so strongly on Virginia that the authorities, although they smarted under his attacks, did not dare to meddle with him. Dinwiddie and the rest could foil him in obtaining a commission in the king's army, but they could not shake his hold upon the people.

In the winter of 1758 his health broke down completely. He was so ill that he thought that his constitution was seriously injured; and therefore withdrew to Mount Vernon, where he slowly recovered. Meantime a great man came at last to the head of affairs in England, and, inspired by William Pitt, fleets and armies went forth to conquer. Reviving at the prospect, Washington offered his services to General Forbes, who had come to undertake the task which Braddock had failed to accomplish. Once more English troops appeared, and a large army was gathered. Then the old story began again, and Washington, whose proffered aid had been gladly received, chafed and worried all summer at the fresh spectacle of delay and stupidity which was presented to him. His advice was disregarded, and all the weary business of building new roads through the wilderness was once more undertaken. A detachment, sent forward contrary to his views, met with the fate of Braddock, and as the summer passed, and autumn

changed to winter, it looked as if nothing would be gained in return for so much toil and preparation. But Pitt had conquered the Ohio in Canada, news arrived of the withdrawal of the French, the army pressed on, and, with Washington in the van, marched into the smoking ruins of Fort Duquesne, henceforth to be known to the world as Fort Pitt.

So closed the first period in Washington's public career. We have seen him pass through it in all its phases. It shows him as an adventurous pioneer, as a reckless frontier fighter, and as a soldier of great promise. He learned many things in this time, and was taught much in the hard school of adversity. In the effort to conquer Frenchmen and Indians he studied the art of war, and at the same time he learned to bear with and to overcome the dullness and inefficiency of the government he served. Thus he was forced to practise self-control in order to attain his ends, and to acquire skill in the management of men. There could have been no better training for the work he was to do in the after years, and the future showed how deeply he profited by it. Let us turn now, for a moment, to the softer and pleasanter side of life, and having seen what Washington was, and what he did as a fighting man, let us try to know him in the equally important and far more attractive domain of private and domestic life.

CHAPTER IV

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Lewis Willis, of Fredericksburg, who was at school with Washington, used to speak of him as an unusually studious and industrious boy, but recalled one occasion when he distinguished himself and surprised his schoolmates by "romping with one of the largest girls."[1] Half a century later, when the days of romping were long over and gone, a gentleman writing of a Mrs. Hartley, whom Washington much admired, said that the general always liked a fine woman.[2] It is certain that from romping he passed rapidly to more serious forms of expressing regard, for by the time he was fourteen he had fallen deeply in love with Mary Bland of Westmoreland, whom he calls his "Lowland Beauty," and to whom he wrote various copies of verses, preserved amid the notes of surveys, in his diary for 1747–48. The old tradition identified the "Lowland Beauty" with Miss Lucy Grymes, perhaps correctly, and there are drafts of letters addressed to "Dear Sally," which suggest

[1] Quoted from the Willis MS. by Mr. Conway, in *Magazine of American History*, March, 1887, p. 196.

[2] *Magazine of American History*, i. 324.

that the mistake in identification might have arisen from the fact that there were several ladies who answered to that description. In the following sentence from the draft of a letter to a masculine sympathizer, also preserved in the tell-tale diary of 1748, there is certainly an indication that the constancy of the lover was not perfect. "Dear Friend Robin," he wrote: "My place of residence at present is at his Lordship's, where I might, were my heart disengaged, pass my time very pleasantly, as there is a very agreeable young lady in the same house, Colonel George Fairfax's wife's sister. But that only adds fuel to the fire, as being often and unavoidably in company with her revives my former passion for your Lowland Beauty; whereas were I to live more retired from young women, I might in some measure alleviate my sorrow by burying that chaste and troublesome passion in oblivion; I am very well assured that this will be the only antidote or remedy." Our gloomy young gentleman, however, did not take to solitude to cure the pangs of despised love, but proceded to calm his spirits by the society of this same sister-in-law of George Fairfax, Miss Mary Cary. One "Lowland Beauty," Lucy Grymes, married Henry Lee, and became the mother of "Legion Harry," a favorite officer and friend of Washington in the Revolution, and the grandmother of Robert E. Lee, the great soldier of the Southern Confederacy. The affair with Miss Cary went on apparently for some years, fitfully pur-

Mary Cary

sued in the intervals of war and Indian fighting, and interrupted also by matters of a more tender nature. The first diversion occurred about 1752, when we find Washington writing to William Fauntleroy, at Richmond, that he proposed to come to his house to see his sister, Miss Betsy, and that he hoped for a revocation of her former cruel sentence.[1] Miss Betsy, however, seems to have been obdurate, and we hear no more of love affairs until much later, and then in connection with matters of a graver sort.

When Captain Dagworthy, commanding thirty men in the Maryland service, undertook in virtue of a king's commission to outrank the commander-in-chief of the Virginian forces, Washington made up his mind that he would have this question at least finally and properly settled. So, as has been said, he went to Boston, saw Governor Shirley, and had the dispute determined in his own favor. He made the journey on horseback, and had with him two of his aides and two servants. An old letter, luckily preserved, tells us how he looked, for it contains orders to his London agents for various articles, sent for perhaps in anticipation of this very expedition. In Braddock's campaign the young surveyor and frontier soldier had been thrown among a party of dashing, handsomely equipped officers fresh from London, and their appearance had engaged his careful attention.

[1] *Historical Magazine*, 3d series, 1873. Letter communicated by Fitzhugh Lee.

Washington was a thoroughly simple man in all ways, but he was also a man of taste and a lover of military discipline. He had a keen sense of appropriateness, a valuable faculty which stood him in good stead in grave as well as trivial matters all through his career, and which in his youth came out most strongly in the matter of manners and personal appearance. He was a handsome man, and liked to be well dressed and to have everything about himself or his servants of the best. Yet he was not a mere imitator of fashions or devoted to fine clothes. The American leggins and fringed hunting-shirt had a strong hold on his affections, and he introduced them into Forbes's army, and again into the army of the Revolution, as the best uniform for the backwoods fighters. But he learned with Braddock that the dress of parade has as real military value as that of service, and when he traveled northward to settle about Captain Dagworthy, he felt justly that he now was going on parade for the first time as the representative of his troops and his colony. Therefore with excellent sense he dressed as befitted the occasion, and at the same time gratified his own taste.

Thanks to these precautions, the little cavalcade that left Virginia on February 4, 1756, must have looked brilliant enough as they rode away through the dark woods. First came the colonel, mounted of course on the finest of animals, for he loved and understood horses from the time when he rode

bareback in the pasture to those later days when he acted as judge at a horse-race and saw his own pet colt "Magnolia" beaten. In this expedition he wore, of course, his uniform of buff and blue, with a white and scarlet cloak over his shoulders, and a sword-knot of red and gold. His "horse furniture" was of the best London make, trimmed with "livery lace," and the Washington arms were engraved upon the housings. Close by his side rode his two aides, likewise in buff and blue, and behind came his servants, dressed in the Washington colors of white and scarlet and wearing hats laced with silver. Thus accoutred, they all rode on together to the North.

The colonel's fame had gone before him, for the hero of Braddock's stricken field and the commander of the Virginian forces was known by reputation throughout the colonies. Every door flew open to him as he passed, and every one was delighted to welcome the young soldier. He was dined and wined and fêted in Philadelphia, and again in New York, where he fell in love at apparently short notice with the heiress Mary Philipse, the sister-in-law of his friend Beverly Robinson. Tearing himself away from these attractions he pushed on to Boston, then the most important city on the continent, and the headquarters of Shirley, the commander-in-chief. The little New England capital had at that time a society which, rich for those days, was relieved from its Puritan sombreness by the gayety and

life brought in by the royal officers. Here Washington lingered ten days, talking war and politics with the governor, visiting in state the "great and general court," dancing every night at some ball, dining with and being fêted by the magnates of the town. His business done, he returned to New York, tarried there awhile for the sake of the fair dame, but came to no conclusions, and then, like the soldier in the song, he gave his bridle-rein a shake and rode away again to the South, and to the harassed and ravaged frontier of Virginia.

How much this little interlude, pushed into a corner as it has been by the dignity of history, — how much it tells of the real man! How the statuesque myth and the priggish myth and the dull and solemn myth melt away before it! Wise and strong, a bearer of heavy responsibility beyond his years, daring in fight and sober in judgment, we have here the other and the more human side of Washington. One loves to picture that gallant, generous, youthful figure, brilliant in color and manly in form, riding gayly on from one little colonial town to another, feasting, dancing, courting, and making merry. For him the myrtle and ivy were entwined with the laurel, and fame was sweetened by youth. He was righteously ready to draw from life all the good things which fate and fortune then smiling upon him could offer, and he took his pleasure frankly, with an honest heart.

We know that he succeeded in his mission and put the captain of thirty men in his proper place,

Mary Morris

but no one now can tell how deeply he was affected by the charms of Miss Philipse. The only certain fact is that he was able not long after to console himself very effectually. Riding away from Mount Vernon once more, in the spring of 1758, this time to Williamsburg with dispatches, he stopped at William's Ferry to dine with his friend Major Chamberlayne, and there he met Martha Dandridge, the widow of Daniel Parke Custis. She was young, pretty, intelligent, and an heiress, and her society seemed to attract the young soldier. The afternoon wore away, the horses came to the door at the appointed time, and after being walked back and forth for some hours were returned to the stable. The sun went down, and still the colonel lingered. The next morning he rode away with his dispatches, but on his return he paused at the White House, the home of Mrs. Custis, and then and there plighted his troth with the charming widow. The wooing was brief and decisive, and the successful lover departed for the camp, to feel more keenly than ever the delays of the British officers and the shortcomings of the colonial government. As soon as Fort Duquesne had fallen he hurried home, resigned his commission in the last week of December, and was married on January 6, 1759. It was a brilliant wedding party which assembled on that winter day in the little church near the White House. There were gathered Francis Fauquier, the gay, free-thinking, high-living governor, gorgeous in scarlet

and gold; British officers, redcoated and gold-laced, and all the neighboring gentry in the handsomest clothes that London credit could furnish. The bride was attired in silk and satin, laces and brocade, with pearls on her neck and in her ears; while the bridegroom appeared in blue and silver trimmed with scarlet, and with gold buckles at his knees and on his shoes. After the ceremony the bride was taken home in a coach and six, her husband riding beside her, mounted on a splendid horse and followed by all the gentlemen of the party.

The sunshine and glitter of the wedding-day must have appeared to Washington deeply appropriate, for he certainly seemed to have all that heart of man could desire. Just twenty-seven, in the first flush of young manhood, keen of sense and yet wise in experience, life must have looked very fair and smiling. He had left the army with a well-earned fame, and had come home to take the wife of his choice and enjoy the good-will and respect of all men. While away on his last campaign he had been elected a member of the House of Burgesses, and when he took his seat on removing to Williamsburg, three months after his marriage, Mr. Robinson, the speaker, thanked him publicly in eloquent words for his services to the country. Washington rose to reply, but he was so utterly unable to talk about himself that he stood before the House stammering and blushing, until the speaker said, "Sit down, Mr. Washing-

ton; your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess." It is an old story, and as graceful as it is old, but it was all very grateful to Washington, especially as the words of the speaker bodied forth the feelings of Virginia. Such an atmosphere, filled with deserved respect and praise, was pleasant to begin with, and then he had everything else too.

He not only continued to sit in the House year after year and help to rule Virginia, but he served on the church vestry, and so held in his hands the reins of local government. He had married a charming woman, simple, straightforward, and sympathetic, free from gossip or pretense, and as capable in practical matters as he was himself. By right of birth a member of the Virginian aristocracy, he had widened and strengthened his connections through his wife. A man of handsome property by the death of Lawrence Washington's daughter, he had become by his marriage one of the richest men of the country. Acknowledged to be the first soldier on the continent, respected and trusted in public, successful and happy in private life, he had attained before he was thirty to all that Virginia could give of wealth, prosperity, and honor, a fact of which he was well aware, for there never breathed a man more wisely contented than George Washington at this period.

He made his home at Mount Vernon, adding many acres to the estate, and giving to it his best attention. It is needless to say that he was suc-

cessful, for that was the case with everything he undertook. He loved country life, and he was the best and most prosperous planter in Virginia, which was really a more difficult achievement than the mere statement implies. Genuinely profitable farming in Virginia was not common, for the general system was a bad one. A single great staple, easily produced by the reckless exhaustion of land, and varying widely in the annual value of crops, bred improvidence and speculation. Everything was bought upon long credits, given by the London merchants, and this, too, contributed largely to carelessness and waste. The chronic state of a planter in a business way was one of debt, and the lack of capital made his conduct of affairs extravagant and loose. With all his care and method Washington himself was often pinched for ready money, and it was only by his thoroughness and foresight that he prospered and made money while so many of his neighbors struggled with debt and lived on in easy luxury, not knowing what the morrow might bring forth.

A far more serious trouble than bad business methods was one which was little heeded at the moment, but which really lay at the foundation of the whole system of society and business. This was the character of the labor by which the plantations were worked. Slave labor is well known now to be the most expensive and the worst form of labor that can be employed. In the middle of the eighteenth century, however, its evils were not

appreciated, either from an economical or a moral point of view. This is not the place to discuss the subject of African slavery in America. But it is important to know Washington's opinions in regard to an institution which was destined to have such a powerful influence upon the country, and it seems most appropriate to consider those opinions at the moment when slaves became a practical factor in his life as a Virginian planter.

Washington accepted the system as he found it, as most men accept the social arrangements to which they are born. He grew up in a world where slavery had always existed, and where its rightfulness had never been questioned. Being on the frontier, occupied with surveying and with war, he never had occasion to really consider the matter at all until he found himself at the head of large estates, with his own prosperity dependent on the labor of slaves. The first practical question, therefore, was how to employ this labor to the best advantage. A man of his clear perceptions soon discovered the defects of the system, and he gave great attention to feeding and clothing his slaves, and to their general management. Parkinson[1] says in a general way that Washington treated his slaves harshly, spoke to them sharply, and maintained a military discipline, to which he attributed the General's rare success as a planter. There can be no doubt of the success, and the military discipline is probably true, but

[1] *Tour in America*, 1798–1800.

the statement as to harshness is unsupported by any other authority. Indeed, Parkinson even contradicts it himself, for he says elsewhere that Washington never bought or sold a slave, a proof of the highest and most intelligent humanity; and he adds in his final sketch of the General's character, that he "was incapable of wrong-doing, but did to all men as he would they should do to him. Therefore it is not to be supposed that he would injure the negro." This agrees with what we learn from all other sources. Humane by nature, he conceived a great interest and pity for these helpless beings, and treated them with kindness and forethought. In a word, he was a wise and good master, as well as a successful one, and the condition of his slaves was as happy, and their labor as profitable, as was possible to such a system.

So the years rolled by; the war came and then the making of the government, and Washington's thoughts were turned more and more, as was the case with all the men of his time in that era of change and of new ideas, to the consideration of human slavery in its moral, political, and social aspects. To trace the course of his opinions in detail is needless. It is sufficient to summarize them, for the results of his reflection and observation are more important than the processes by which they were reached. Washington became convinced that the whole system was thoroughly bad, as well as utterly repugnant to the ideas upon which the Revolution was fought and the govern-

ment of the United States founded. With a prescience wonderful for those days and on that subject, he saw that slavery meant the up-growth in the United States of two systems so radically hostile, both socially and economically, that they could lead only to a struggle for political supremacy, which in its course he feared would imperil the Union. For this reason he deprecated the introduction of the slavery question into the debates of the first Congress, because he realized its character, and he did not believe that the Union or the government at that early day could bear the strain which in this way would be produced. At the same time he felt that a right solution must be found or inconceivable evils would ensue. The inherent and everlasting wrong of the system made its continuance, to his mind, impossible. While it existed, he believed that the laws which surrounded it should be maintained, because he thought that to violate these only added one wrong to another. He also doubted, as will be seen in a later chapter, where his conversation with John Bernard is quoted, whether the negroes could be immediately emancipated with safety either to themselves or to the whites, in their actual condition of ignorance, illiteracy, and helplessness. The plan which he favored, and which, it would seem, was his hope and reliance, was first the checking of importation, followed by a gradual emancipation, with proper compensation to the owners and suitable preparation and education for

the slaves. He told the clergymen Asbury and Coke, when they visited him for that purpose, that he was in favor of emancipation, and was ready to write a letter to the assembly to that effect.[1] He wished fervently that such a spirit might take possession of the people of the country, but he wrote to Lafayette that he despaired of seeing it. When he died he did all that lay within his power to impress his views upon his countrymen by directing that all his slaves should be set free on the death of his wife. His precepts and his example in this grave matter went unheeded for many years by the generations which came after him. But now that slavery is dead, to the joy of all men, it is well to remember that on this terrible question Washington's opinions were those of a humane man, impatient of wrong, and of a noble and far-seeing statesman, watchful of the evils that threatened his country.[2]

After this digression let us return to the Virginian farmer, whose mind was not disturbed as yet by thoughts of the destiny of the United States, or considerations of the rights of man, but who was much exercised by the task of making an honest income out of his estates. To do this he grappled with details as firmly as he did with the general system under which all plantations in that day were carried on. He understood every branch

[1] *Magazine of American History*, 1880, p. 158.

[2] For some expressions of Washington's opinions on slavery, see Sparks, viii. 414, ix. 159–163, and x. 224.

of farming; he was on the alert for every improvement; he rose early, worked steadily, gave to everything his personal supervision, kept his own accounts with wonderful exactness, and naturally enough his brands of flour went unquestioned everywhere, his credit was high, and he made money — so far as it was possible under existing conditions. Like Shakespeare, as Bishop Blougram has it, he

> "Saved money, spent it, owned the worth of things."

He had no fine and senseless disregard for money or the good things of this world, but on the contrary saw in them not the value attached to them by vulgar minds, but their true worth. He was a solid, square, evenly-balanced man in those days, believing that whatever he did was worth doing well. So he farmed, as he fought and governed, better than anybody else.

While thus looking after his own estates at home, he went further afield in search of investments, keeping a shrewd eye on the western lands, and buying wisely and judiciously whenever he had the opportunity. He also constituted himself now, as in a later time, the champion of the soldiers, for whom he had the truest sympathy and affection, and a large part of the correspondence of this period is devoted to their claims for the lands granted them by the assembly. He distinguished carefully among them, however, those who were undeserving, and to the major of the regi-

ment, who had been excluded from the public thanks on account of cowardice at the Great Meadows, he wrote as follows: "Your impertinent letter was delivered to me yesterday. As I am not accustomed to receive such from any man, nor would have taken the same language from you personally without letting you feel some marks of my resentment, I would advise you to be cautious in writing me a second of the same tenor. But for your stupidity and sottishness you might have known, by attending to the public gazette, that you had your full quantity of ten thousand acres of land allowed you. But suppose you had really fallen short, do you think your superlative merit entitles you to greater indulgence than others? . . . All my concern is that I ever engaged in behalf of so ungrateful a fellow as you are." The writer of this letter, be it said in passing, was the man whom Mr. Weems and others tell us was knocked down before his soldiers, and then apologized to his assailant. It may be suspected that it was well for the recipient of this letter that he did not have a personal interview with its author, and it may be doubted if he ever sought one subsequently. Just, generous, and magnanimous to an extraordinary degree, Washington had a dangerous temper, held well under control, but blazing out now and again against injustice, insolence, or oppression. He was a peaceful man, leading a peaceful life, but the fighting spirit only slumbered, and it would break out at wrong of any

sort, in a way which was extremely unpleasant and threatening to those who aroused it.

Apart from lands and money and the management of affairs, public and private, there were many other interests of varied nature which all had their share of Washington's time and thought. He was a devoted husband, and gave to his step-children the most affectionate care. He watched over and protected them, and when the daughter died, after a long and wasting illness, in 1773, he mourned for her as if she had been his own, with all the tenderness of a deep and reserved affection. The boy, John Custis, he made his friend and companion from the beginning, and his letters to the lad and about him are wise and judicious in the highest degree. He spent much time and thought on the question of education, and after securing the best instructors took the boy to New York and entered him at Columbia College in 1773. Young Custis, however, did not remain there long, for he had fallen in love, and the following year was married to Eleanor Calvert, not without some misgivings on the part of Washington, who had observed his ward's somewhat flighty disposition, and who gave a great deal of anxious thought to his future. At home as abroad he was an undemonstrative man, but he had abundance of that real affection which labors for those to whom it goes out more unselfishly and far more effectually than that which bubbles and boils upon the surface like a shallow, noisy brook.

From the suggestions that he made in regard to young Custis, it is evident that Washington valued and respected education, and that he had that regard for learning for its own sake which always exists in large measure in every thoughtful man. He read well, even if his active life prevented his reading much, as we can see by his vigorous English, and by his occasional allusions to history. From his London orders we see, too, that everything about his house must have denoted that its possessor had refinement and taste. His intense sense of propriety and unfailing instinct for what was appropriate are everywhere apparent. His dress, his furniture, his harnesses, the things for the children, all show the same fondness for simplicity, and yet a constant insistence that everything should be the best of its kind. We can learn a good deal about any man by the ornaments of his house, and by the portraits which hang on his walls; for these dumb things tell us whom among the great men of earth the owner admires, and indicate the tastes he best loves to gratify. When Washington first settled with his wife at Mount Vernon, he ordered from Europe the busts of Alexander the Great, Charles XII. of Sweden, Julius Cæsar, Frederick of Prussia, Marlborough, and Prince Eugene, and in addition he asked for statuettes of "two wild beasts." The combination of soldier and statesman is the predominant admiration, then comes the reckless and splendid military adventurer, and lastly wild life

and the chase. There is no mistaking the ideas and fancies of the man who penned this order which has drifted down to us from the past.

But as Washington's active life was largely out of doors, so too were his pleasures. He loved the fresh open-air existence of the woods and fields, and there he found his one great amusement. He shot and fished, but did not care much for these pursuits, for his hobby was hunting, which gratified at once his passion for horses and dogs and his love for the strong excitement of the chase, when dashed with just enough danger to make it really fascinating. He showed in his sport the same thoroughness and love of perfection that he displayed in everything else. His stables were filled with the best horses that Virginia could furnish. There were the "blooded coach-horses" for Mrs. Washington's carriage, "Magnolia," a full-blooded Arabian, used by his owner for the road, the ponies for the children, and finally, the high-bred hunters Chinkling and Valiant, Ajax and Blueskin, and the rest, all duly set down in the register in the handwriting of the master himself. His first visit in the morning was to the stables; the next to the kennels to inspect and criticise the hounds, also methodically registered and described, so that we can read the names of Vulcan and Ringwood, Singer and Truelove, Music and Sweetlips, to which the Virginian woods once echoed nearly a century and a half ago. His hounds were the subject of much thought, and

were so constantly and critically drafted as to speed, keenness, and bottom, that when in full cry they ran so closely bunched that tradition says, in classic phrase, they could have been covered with a blanket. The hounds met three times a week in the season, usually at Mount Vernon, sometimes at Belvoir. They would get off at daybreak, Washington in the midst of his hounds, splendidly mounted, generally on his favorite Blueskin, a powerful iron-gray horse of great speed and endurance. He wore a blue coat, scarlet waistcoat, buckskin breeches, and a velvet cap. Closely followed by his huntsman and the neighboring gentlemen, with the ladies, headed, very likely, by Mrs. Washington in a scarlet habit, he would ride to the appointed covert and throw in. There was no difficulty in finding, and then away they would go, usually after a gray fox, sometimes after a big black fox, rarely to be caught. Most of the country was wild and unfenced, rough in footing, and offering hard and dangerous going for the horses, but Washington always made it a rule to stay with his hounds. Cautious or timid riders, if they were so minded, could gallop along the wood roads with the ladies, and content themselves with glimpses of the hunt, but the master rode at the front. The fields, it is to be feared, were sometimes small, but Washington hunted even if he had only his stepson or was quite alone.

His diaries abound with allusions to the sport. "Went a-hunting with Jacky Custis, and catched

a fox after three hours chase; found it in the creek." "Mr. Bryan Fairfax, Mr. Grayson, and Phil. Alexander came home by sunrise. Hunted and catched a fox with these, Lord Fairfax, his brother, and Colonel Fairfax, all of whom, with Mr. Fairfax and Mr. Wilson of England, dined here." Again, November 26 and 29, "Hunted again with the same party." "1768, Jan. 8th. Hunting again with same company. Started a fox and run him 4 hours. Took the hounds off at night." "Jan. 15. Shooting." "16. At home all day with cards; it snowing." "23. Rid to Muddy Hole and directed paths to be cut for fox-hunting." "Feb. 12. Catched 2 foxes." "Feb. 13. Catched 2 more foxes." "Mar. 2. Catched fox with bob'd tail and cut ears after 7 hours chase, in which most of the dogs were worsted." "Dec. 5. Fox-hunting with Lord Fairfax and his brother and Colonel Fairfax. Started a fox and lost it. Dined at Belvoir and returned in the evening."[1]

So the entries run on, for he hunted almost every day in the season, usually with success, but always with persistence. Like all true sportsmen Washington had a horror of illicit sport of any kind, and although he shot comparatively little, he was much annoyed by a vagabond who lurked in the creeks and inlets on his estate, and slaughtered his canvas-back ducks. Hearing the report of a gun one morning, he rode through the bushes

[1] MS. Diaries in State Department.

and saw his poaching friend just shoving off in a canoe. The rascal raised his gun and covered his pursuer, whereupon Washington, the cold-blooded and patient person so familiar in the myths, dashed his horse headlong into the water, seized the gun, grasped the canoe, and dragging it ashore pulled the man out of the boat and beat him soundly. If the man had yielded at once he would probably have got off easily enough, but when he put Washington's life in imminent peril, the wild fighting spirit flared up as usual.

The hunting season was of course that of the most lavish hospitality. There was always a great deal of dining about, but Mount Vernon was the chief resort, and its doors, ever open, were flung far back when people came for a meet, or gathered to talk over the events of a good run. Company was the rule and solitude the exception. When only the family were at dinner, the fact was written down in the diary with great care as an unusual event, for Washington was the soul of hospitality, and although he kept early hours, he loved society and a houseful of people. Profoundly reserved and silent as to himself, a lover of solitude so far as his own thoughts and feelings were concerned, he was far from being a solitary man in the ordinary acceptation of the word. He liked life and gayety and conversation, he liked music and dancing or a game of cards when the weather was bad, and he enjoyed heartily the presence of young people and of his own friends.

So Mount Vernon was always full of guests, and the master noted in his diary that although he owned more than a hundred cows he was obliged, nevertheless, to buy butter, which suggests an experience not unknown to gentlemen farmers of any period, and also that company was never lacking in that generous, open house overlooking the Potomac.

Beyond the bounds of his own estate he had also many occupations and pleasures. He was a member of the House of Burgesses, diligent in his attention to the work of governing the colony. He was diligent also in church affairs, and very active in the vestry, which was the seat of local government in Virginia. We hear of him also as the manager of lotteries, which were a common form of raising money for local purposes, in preference to direct taxation. In a word, he was thoroughly public-spirited, and performed all the small duties which his position demanded in the same spirit that he afterwards brought to the command of armies and to the government of the nation. He had pleasure too, as well as business, away from Mount Vernon. He liked to go to his neighbors' houses and enjoy their hospitality as they enjoyed his. We hear of him at the court-house on court days, where all the countryside gathered to talk and listen to the lawyers and hear the news, and when he went to Williamsburg his diary tells us of a round of dinners, beginning with the governor, of visits to the club, and of a

regular attendance at the theatre whenever actors came to the little capital. Whether at home or abroad, he took part in all the serious pursuits, in all the interests, and in every reasonable pleasure offered by the colony.

Take it for all in all, it was a manly, wholesome, many-sided life. It kept Washington young and strong, both mentally and physically. When he was forty he flung the iron bar, at some village sports, to a point which no competitor could approach. There was no man in all Virginia who could ride a horse with such a powerful and assured seat. There was no one who could journey farther on foot, and no man at Williamsburg who showed at the governor's receptions such a commanding presence, or who walked with such a strong and elastic step. As with the body so with the mind. He never rusted. A practical carpenter and smith, he brought the same quiet intelligence and firm will to the forging of iron or the felling and sawing of trees that he had displayed in fighting France. The life of a country gentleman did not dull or stupefy him, or lead him to gross indulgences. He remained well-made and athletic, strong and enduring, keen in perception and in sense, and warm in his feelings and affections. Many men would have become heavy and useless in these years of quiet country life, but Washington simply ripened, and, like all slowly maturing men, grew stronger, abler, and wiser in the happy years of rest and waiting which intervened between youth and middle age.

Meantime, while the current of daily life flowed on thus gently at Mount Vernon, the great stream of public events poured by outside. It ran very calmly at first, after the war, and then with a quickening murmur, which increased to an ominous roar when the passage of the Stamp Act became known in America. Washington was always a constant attendant at the assembly, in which by sheer force of character, and despite his lack of the talking and debating faculty, he carried more weight than any other member. He was present on May 29, 1765, when Patrick Henry introduced his famous resolutions and menaced the king's government in words which rang through the continent. The resolutions were adopted, and Washington went home, with many anxious thoughts, to discuss the political outlook with his friend and neighbor George Mason, one of the keenest and ablest men in Virginia. The utter folly of the policy embodied in the Stamp Act struck Washington very forcibly. With that foresight for which he was so remarkable, he perceived what scarcely any one else even dreamt of, that persistence in this course must surely lead to a violent separation from the mother-country, and it is interesting to note in this, the first instance when he was called upon to consider a political question of great magnitude, his clearness of vision and grasp of mind. In what he wrote there is no trace of the ambitious schemer, no threatening nor blustering, no undue despondency

nor excited hopes. But there is a calm understanding of all the conditions, an entire freedom from self-deception, and the power of seeing facts exactly as they were, which were all characteristic of his intellectual strength, and to which we shall need to recur again and again.

The repeal of the Stamp Act was received by Washington with sober but sincere pleasure. He had anticipated "direful" results and "unhappy consequences" from its enforcement, and he freely said that those who were instrumental in its repeal had his cordial thanks. He was no agitator, and had not come forward in this affair, so he now retired again to Mount Vernon, to his farming and hunting, where he remained, watching very closely the progress of events. He had marked the dangerous reservation of the principle in the very act of repeal; he observed at Boston the gathering strength of what the wise ministers of George III. called sedition; he noted the arrival of British troops in the rebellious Puritan town; and he saw plainly enough, looming in the background, the final appeal to arms. He wrote to Mason (April 5, 1769), that "at a time when our lordly masters in Great Britain will be satisfied with nothing less than the deprivation of American freedom, something should be done to avert the stroke and maintain the liberty which we have derived from our ancestors. But the manner of doing it, to answer the purpose effectually, is the point in question. That no man should scruple or

hesitate a moment to use arms in defense of so valuable a blessing is clearly my opinion. Yet arms, I would beg leave to add, should be the last resource, the *dernier ressort*." He then urged the adoption of the only middle course, non-importation, but he had not much hope in this expedient, although an honest desire is evident that it may prove effectual.

When the assembly met in May, they received the new governôr, Lord Botetourt, with much cordiality, and then fell to passing spirited and sharp-spoken resolutions declaring their own rights and defending Massachusetts. The result was a dissolution. Thereupon the burgesses repaired to the Raleigh tavern, where they adopted a set of non-importation resolutions and formed an association. The resolutions were offered by Washington, and were the result of his quiet country talks with Mason. When the moment for action arrived, Washington came naturally to the front, and then returned quietly to Mount Vernon, once more to go about his business and watch the threatening political horizon. Virginia did not live up to this first non-importation agreement, and formed another a year later. But Washington was not in the habit of presenting resolutions merely for effect, and there was nothing of the actor in his composition. His resolutions meant business, and he lived up to them rigidly himself. Neither tea nor any of the proscribed articles were allowed in his house. Most of the leaders did

not realize the seriousness of the situation, but Washington, looking forward with clear and sober gaze, was in grim earnest, and was fully conscious that when he offered his resolutions the colony was trying the last peaceful remedy, and that the next step would be war.

Still he went calmly about his many affairs as usual, and gratified the old passion for the frontier by a journey to Pittsburgh for the sake of lands and soldiers' claims, and thence down the Ohio and into the wilderness with his old friends the trappers and pioneers. He visited the Indian villages as in the days of the French mission, and noted in the savages an ominous restlessness, which seemed, like the flight of birds, to express the dumb instinct of an approaching storm. The clouds broke away somewhat under the kindly management of Lord Botetourt, and then gathered again more thickly on the accession of his successor, Lord Dunmore. With both these gentlemen Washington was on the most friendly terms. He visited them often, and was consulted by them, as it behooved them to consult the strongest man within the limits of their government. Still he waited and watched, and scanned carefully the news from the North. Before long he heard that tea-chests were floating in Boston harbor, and then from across the water came intelligence of the passage of the Port Bill and other measures destined to crush to earth the little rebel town.

When the Virginia assembly met again, they

proceeded to congratulate the governor on the arrival of Lady Dunmore, and then suddenly, as all was flowing smoothly along, there came a letter through the corresponding committee which Washington had helped to establish, telling of the measures against Boston. Everything else was thrown aside at once, a vigorous protest was entered on the journal of the House, and June 1, when the Port Bill was to go into operation, was appointed a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. The first result was prompt dissolution of the assembly. The next was another meeting in the long room of the Raleigh tavern, where the Boston bill was denounced, non-importation renewed, and the committee of correspondence instructed to take steps for calling a general congress. Events were beginning to move at last with perilous rapidity. Washington dined with Lord Dunmore on the evening of that day, rode with him, and appeared at her ladyship's ball the next night, for it was not his way to bite his thumb at men from whom he differed politically, nor to call the motives of his opponents in question. But when the 1st of June arrived, he noted in his diary that he fasted all day and attended the appointed services. He always meant what he said, being of a simple nature, and when he fasted and prayed there was something ominously earnest about it, something that his excellency the governor, who liked the society of this agreeable man and wise counselor, would have done well to consider and draw con-

clusions from, and which he probably did not heed at all. He might well have reflected, as he undoubtedly failed to do, that when men of the George Washington type fast and pray on account of political misdoings, it is well for their opponents to look to it carefully.

Meantime Boston had sent forth appeals to form a league among the colonies, and thereupon another meeting was held in the Raleigh tavern, and a letter was dispatched advising the burgesses to consider this matter of a general league and take the sense of their respective counties. Virginia and Massachusetts had joined hands now, and they were sweeping the rest of the continent irresistibly forward with them. As for Washington, he returned to Mount Vernon and at once set about taking the sense of his county, as he had agreed. Before doing so he had some correspondence with his old friend Bryan Fairfax. The Fairfaxes naturally sided with the mother-country, and Bryan was much distressed by the course of Virginia, and remonstrated strongly, and at length by letter, against violent measures. Washington replied to him: "Does it not appear as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness that there is a regular, systematic plan formed to fix the right and practice of taxation on us? Does not the uniform conduct of Parliament for some years past confirm this? Do not all the debates, especially those just brought to us in the House of Commons, on the side of government expressly

declare that America must be taxed in aid of the British funds, and that she has no longer resources within herself? Is there anything to be expected from petitioning after this? Is not the attack upon the liberty and property of the people of Boston, before restitution of the loss to the India Company was demanded, a plain and self-evident proof of what they are aiming at? Do not the subsequent bills (now I dare say acts) for depriving the Massachusetts Bay of its charter, and for transporting offenders into other colonies, or to Great Britain for trial, where it is impossible from the nature of the thing that justice can be obtained, convince us that the administration is determined to stick at nothing to carry its point? Ought we not, then, to put our virtue and fortitude to the severest test?" He was prepared, he continued, for anything except confiscating British debts, which struck him as dishonorable. These were plain but pregnant questions, but what we mark in them, and in all his letters of this time, is the absence of constitutional discussion, of which America was then full. They are confined to a direct presentation of the broad political question, which underlay everything. Washington always went straight to the mark, and he now saw, through all the dust of legal and constitutional strife, that the only real issue was whether America was to be allowed to govern herself in her own way or not. In the acts of the ministry he perceived a policy which aimed at substantial power,

and he believed that such a policy, if insisted on, could have but one result.

The meeting of Fairfax County was held in due course, and Washington presided. The usual resolutions for self-government and against the vindictive Massachusetts measures were adopted. Union and non-importation were urged; and then the congress, which they advocated, was recommended to address a petition and remonstrance to the king, and ask him to reflect that "from our sovereign there can be but one appeal." Everything was to be tried, everything was to be done, but the ultimate appeal was never lost sight of where Washington appeared, and the final sentence of these Fairfax County resolves is very characteristic of the leader in the meeting. Two days later he wrote to the worthy and still remonstrating Bryan Fairfax, repeating and enlarging his former questions, and adding: "Has not General Gage's conduct since his arrival, in stopping the address of his council, and publishing a proclamation more becoming a Turkish bashaw than an English governor, declaring it treason to associate in any manner by which the commerce of Great Britain is to be affected, — has not this exhibited an unexampled testimony of the most despotic system of tyranny that ever was practiced in a free government? . . . Shall we after this whine and cry for relief, when we have already tried it in vain? Or shall we supinely sit and see one province after another fall a sacrifice to despotism?" The fighting spirit of the man was

rising. There was no rash rushing forward, no ignorant shouting for war, no blinking of the real issue, but a foresight that nothing could dim, and a perception of facts which nothing could confuse.

On August 1 Washington was at Williamsburg, to represent his county in the meeting of representatives from all Virginia. The convention passed resolutions like the Fairfax resolves, and chose delegates to a general congress. The silent man was now warming into action. He "made the most eloquent speech that ever was made," and said, "I will raise a thousand men, subsist them at my own expense, and march them to the relief of Boston." He was capable, it would seem, of talking to the purpose with some fire and force, for all he was so quiet and so retiring. When there was anything to say, he could say it so that it stirred all who listened, because they felt that there was a mastering strength behind the words. He faced the terrible issue solemnly and firmly, but his blood was up, the fighting spirit in him was aroused, and the convention chose him as one of Virginia's six delegates to the Continental Congress. He lingered long enough to make a few preparations at Mount Vernon. He wrote another letter to Fairfax, interesting to us as showing the keenness with which he read in the meagre news-reports the character of Gage and of the opposing people of Massachusetts. Then he started for the North to take the first step on the long and difficult path that lay before him.

CHAPTER V

TAKING COMMAND

In the warm days of closing August, a party of three gentlemen rode away from Mount Vernon one morning, and set out upon their long journey to Philadelphia. One cannot help wondering whether a tender and somewhat sad remembrance did not rise in Washington's mind, as he thought of the last time he had gone northward, nearly twenty years before. Then, he was a light-hearted young soldier, and he and his aides, albeit they went on business, rode gayly through the forests, lighting the road with the bright colors they wore and with the glitter of lace and arms, while they anticipated all the pleasures of youth in the new lands they were to visit. Now, he was in the prime of manhood, looking into the future with prophetic eyes, and sober as was his wont when the shadow of coming responsibility lay dark upon his path. With him went Patrick Henry, four years his junior, and Edmund Pendleton, now past threescore. They were all quiet and grave enough, no doubt; but Washington, we may believe, was gravest of all, because, being the most truthful of men to himself as to others, he saw more plainly

what was coming. So they made their journey to the North, and on the memorable 5th of September they met with their brethren from the other colonies in Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia.

The Congress sat fifty-one days, occupied with debates and discussion. Few abler, more honest, or more memorable bodies of men have ever assembled to settle the fate of nations. Much debate, great and earnest in all directions, resulted in a declaration of colonial rights, in an address to the king, in another to the people of Canada, and a third to the people of Great Britain; masterly state papers, seldom surpassed, and extorting even then the admiration of England. In these debates and state papers Washington took no part that is now apparent on the face of the record. He was silent in the Congress, and if he was consulted, as he unquestionably was by the committees, there is no record of it now. The simple fact was that his time had not come. He saw men of the most acute minds, liberal in education, patriotic in heart, trained in law and in history, doing the work of the moment in the best possible way. If anything had been done wrongly, or had been left undone, Washington would have found his voice quickly enough, and uttered another of the "most eloquent speeches ever made," as he did shortly before in the Virginia convention. He could speak in public when need was, but now there was no need and nothing to arouse him. The work of Congress followed the line of policy adopted by

the Virginia convention, and that had proceeded along the path marked out in the Fairfax resolves, so that Washington could not be other than content. He occupied his own time, as we see by notes in his diary, in visiting the delegates from the other colonies, and in informing himself as to their ideas and purposes, and those of the people whom they represented. He was quietly working for the future, the present being well taken care of. Yet this silent man, going hither and thither, and chatting pleasantly with this member or that, was in some way or other impressing himself deeply on all the delegates, for Patrick Henry said: "If you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Colonel Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on the floor."

We have a letter, written at just this time, which shows us how Washington felt, and we see again how his spirit rose as he saw more and more clearly that the ultimate issue was inevitable. The letter is addressed to Captain Mackenzie, a British officer at Boston, and an old friend. "Permit me," he began, "with the freedom of a friend (for you know I always esteemed you), to express my sorrow that fortune should place you in a service that must fix curses to the latest posterity upon the contrivers, and, if success (which, by the by, is impossible) accompanies it, execrations upon all those who have been instrumental in the execution." This was rather uncompromising talk and not over peaceable, it must be

confessed. He continued: "Give me leave to add, and I think I can announce it as a fact, that it is not the wish or intent of that government [Massachusetts], or any other upon this continent, separately or collectively, to set up for independence; but this you may at the same time rely on, that none of them will ever submit to the loss of those valuable rights and privileges which are essential to the happiness of every free state, and without which life, liberty, and property are rendered totally insecure. . . . Again give me leave to add as my opinion that more blood will be spilled on this occasion, if the ministry are determined to push matters to extremity, than history has ever yet furnished instances of in the annals of North America, and such a vital wound will be given to the peace of this great country, as time itself cannot cure or eradicate the remembrance of." Washington was not a political agitator like Sam Adams, planning with unerring intelligence to bring about independence. On the contrary, he rightly declared that independence was not desired. But although he believed in exhausting every argument and every peaceful remedy, it is evident that he felt that there now could be but one result, and that violent separation from the mother country was inevitable. Here is where he differed from his associates and from the great mass of the people, and it is to this entire veracity of mind that his wisdom and foresight were so largely due, as well as his suc-

cess when the time came for him to put his hand to the plough.

When Congress adjourned, Washington returned to Mount Vernon, to the pursuits and pleasures that he loved, to his family and farm, and to his horses and hounds, with whom he had many a good run, the last that he was to enjoy for years to come. He returned also to wait and watch as before, and to see war rapidly gather in the east. When the Virginia convention again assembled, resolutions were introduced to arm and discipline men, and Henry declared in their support that an "appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts" was all that was left. Washington said nothing, but he served on the committee to draft a plan of defense, and then fell to reviewing the independent companies which were springing up everywhere. At the same time he wrote to his brother John, who had raised a troop, that he would accept the command of it if desired, as it was his "full intention to devote his life and fortune in the cause we are engaged in, if needful." At Mount Vernon his old comrades of the French war began to appear, in search of courage and sympathy. Thither, too, came Charles Lee, a typical military adventurer of that period, a man of English birth and of varied service, brilliant, whimsical, and unbalanced. There also came Horatio Gates, likewise British, and disappointed with his prospects at home; less adventurous than Lee, but also less brilliant, and not much more valuable.

Thus the winter wore away; spring opened, and toward the end of April Washington started again for the North, much occupied with certain tidings from Lexington and Concord which just then spread over the land. He saw all that it meant plainly enough, and after noting the fact that the colonists fought and fought well, he wrote to George Fairfax in England: "Unhappy it is to reflect that a brother's sword has been sheathed in a brother's breast, and that the once happy and peaceful plains of America are either to be drenched in blood or inhabited by slaves. Sad alternative. But can a virtuous man hesitate in his choice?" Congress, it would seem, thought there was a good deal of room for hesitation, both for virtuous men and others, and after the fashion of their race determined to do a little more debating and arguing, before taking any decisive step. After much resistance and discussion, a second "humble and dutiful petition" to the king was adopted, and with strange contradiction a confederation was formed at the same time, and Congress proceeded to exercise the sovereign powers thus vested in them. The most pressing and troublesome question before them was what to do with the army surrounding Boston, and with the actual hostilities there existing.

Washington, for his part, went quietly about as before, saying nothing and observing much, working hard as chairman of the military committees, planning for defense, and arranging for raising an

army. One act of his alone stands out for us with significance at this critical time. In this second Congress he appeared habitually on the floor in his blue and buff uniform of a Virginia colonel. It was his way of saying that the hour for action had come, and that he at least was ready for the fight whenever called upon.

Presently he was summoned. Weary of waiting, John Adams at last declared that Congress must adopt the army and make Washington, who at this mention of his name stepped out of the room, commander-in-chief. On June 15, formal motions were made to this effect and unanimously adopted, and the next day Washington appeared before Congress and accepted the trust. His words were few and simple. He expressed his sense of his own insufficiency for the task before him, and said that as no pecuniary consideration could have induced him to undertake the work, he must decline all pay or emoluments, only looking to Congress to defray his expenses. In the same spirit he wrote to his soldiers in Virginia, to his brother, and finally, in terms at once simple and pathetic, to his wife. There was no pretense about this, but the sternest reality of self-distrust, for Washington saw and measured as did no one else the magnitude of the work before him. He knew that he was about to face the best troops of Europe, and he had learned by experience that after the first excitement was over he would be obliged to rely upon a people who were brave and

patriotic, but also undisciplined, untrained, and unprepared for war, without money, without arms, without allies or credit, and torn by selfish local interests. Nobody else perceived all this as he was able to with his mastery of facts, but he faced the duty unflinchingly. He did not put it aside because he distrusted himself, for in his truthfulness he could not but confess that no other American could show one tithe of his capacity, experience, or military service. He knew what was coming, knew it, no doubt, when he first put on his uniform, and he accepted instantly.

John Adams in his autobiography speaks of the necessity of choosing a Southern general, and also says there were objectors to the selection of Washington even among the Virginia delegates. That there were political reasons for taking a Virginian cannot be doubted. But the dissent, even if it existed, never appeared on the surface, excepting in the case of John Hancock, who, with curious vanity, thought that he ought to have this great place. When Washington's name was proposed there was no murmur of opposition, for there was no man who could for one moment be compared with him in fitness. The choice was inevitable, and he himself felt it to be so. He saw it coming; he would fain have avoided the great task, but no thought of shrinking crossed his mind. He saw with his entire freedom from constitutional subtleties that an absolute parliament sought to extend its power to the colonies. To this he

would not submit, and he knew that this was a question which could be settled only by one side giving way, or by the dread appeal to arms. It was a question of fact, hard, unrelenting fact, now to be determined by battle, and on him had fallen the burden of sustaining the cause of his country. In this spirit he accepted his commission, and rode forth to review the troops. He was greeted with loud acclaim wherever he appeared. Mankind is impressed by externals, and those who gazed upon Washington in the streets of Philadelphia felt their courage rise and their hearts grow strong at the sight of his virile, muscular figure as he passed before them on horseback, stately, dignified, and self-contained. The people looked upon him, and were confident that this was a man worthy and able to dare and do all things.

On June 21 he set forth accompanied by Lee and Schuyler, and with a brilliant escort. He had ridden but twenty miles when he was met by the news of Bunker Hill. "Did the militia fight?" was the immediate and characteristic question; and being told that they did fight, he exclaimed, "Then the liberties of the country are safe." Given the fighting spirit, Washington felt he could do anything. Full of this important intelligence he pressed forward to Newark, where he was received by a committee of the provincial congress, sent to conduct the commander-in-chief to New York. There he tarried long enough to appoint Schuyler to the charge of the military

affairs in that colony, having mastered on the journey its complicated social and political conditions. Pushing on through Connecticut he reached Watertown, where he was received by the provincial congress of Massachusetts, on July 2, with every expression of attachment and confidence. Lingering less than an hour for this ceremony, he rode on to the headquarters at Cambridge, and when he came within the lines the shouts of the soldiers and the booming of cannon announced his arrival to the English in Boston.

The next day he rode forth in the presence of a great multitude, and the troops having been drawn up before him, he drew his sword beneath the historical elm-tree, and took command of the first American army. "His excellency," wrote Dr. Thatcher in his journal, "was on horseback in company with several military gentlemen. It was not difficult to distinguish him from all others. He is tall and well proportioned, and his personal appearance truly noble and majestic." "He is tall and of easy and agreeable address," the loyalist Curwen had remarked a few weeks before; while Mrs. John Adams, warm-hearted and clever, wrote to her husband after the general's arrival: "Dignity, ease, and complacency, the gentleman and the soldier, look agreeably blended in him. Modesty marks every line and feature of his face. Those lines of Dryden instantly occurred to me, —

> 'Mark his majestic fabric! He 's a temple
> Sacred by birth, and built by hands divine;

His soul 's the deity that lodges there ;
Nor is the pile unworthy of the God.' "

Lady, lawyer, and surgeon, patriot and tory, all speak alike, and as they wrote so New England felt. A slave-owner, an aristocrat, and a churchman, Washington came to Cambridge to pass over the heads of native generals to the command of a New England army, among a democratic people, hard-working and simple in their lives, and dissenters to the backbone, who regarded episcopacy as something little short of papistry and quite equivalent to toryism. Yet the shout that went up from soldiers and people on Cambridge common on that pleasant July morning came from the heart and had no jarring note. A few of the political chiefs growled a little in later days at Washington, but the soldiers and the people, high and low, rich and poor, gave him an unstinted loyalty. On the fields of battle and throughout eight years of political strife the men of New England stood by the great Virginian with a devotion and truth in which was no shadow of turning. Here again we see exhibited most conspicuously the powerful personality of the man who was able thus to command immediately the allegiance of this naturally cold and reserved people. What was it that they saw which inspired them at once with so much confidence? They looked upon a tall, handsome man, dressed in plain uniform, wearing across his breast a broad blue band of silk, which some may have noticed as the badge

and symbol of a certain solemn league and covenant once very momentous in the English-speaking world. They saw his calm, high bearing, and in every line of face and figure they beheld the signs of force and courage. Yet there must have been something more to call forth the confidence then so quickly given, and which no one ever long withheld. All felt dimly, but none the less surely, that here was a strong, able man, capable of rising to the emergency, whatever it might be, capable of continued growth and development, clear of head and warm of heart; and so the New England people gave to him instinctively their sympathy and their faith, and never took either back.

The shouts and cheers died away, and then Washington returned to his temporary quarters in the Wadsworth house, to master the task before him. The first great test of his courage and ability had come, and he faced it quietly as the excitement caused by his arrival passed by. He saw before him, to use his own words, "a mixed multitude of people, under very little discipline, order, or government." In the language of one of his aides:[1] "The entire army, if it deserved the name, was but an assemblage of brave, enthusiastic, undisciplined, country lads; the officers in general quite as ignorant of military life as the troops, excepting a few elderly men, who had seen some irregular service among the provincials under Lord Amherst." With this force, ill-posted and

[1] John Trumbull, *Reminiscences*, p. 18.

very insecurely fortified, Washington was to drive the British from Boston. His first step was to count his men, and it took eight days to get the necessary returns, which in an ordinary army would have been furnished in an hour. When he had them, he found that instead of twenty thousand, as had been represented, but fourteen thousand soldiers were actually present for duty. In a short time, however, Mr. Emerson, the chaplain, noted in his diary that it was surprising how much had been done, that the lines had been so extended, and the works so shrewdly built, that it was morally impossible for the enemy to get out except in one place purposely left open. A little later the same observer remarked: "There is a great overturning in the camp as to order and regularity; new lords, new laws. The Generals Washington and Lee are upon the lines every day. The strictest government is taking place, and great distinction is made between officers and soldiers." Bodies of troops scattered here and there by chance were replaced by well-distributed forces, posted wisely and effectively in strong intrenchments. It is little wonder that the worthy chaplain was impressed, and now, seeing it all from every side, we too can watch order come out of chaos and mark the growth of an army under the guidance of a master-mind and the steady pressure of an unbending will.

Then too there was no discipline, for the army was composed of raw militia, who elected their

officers and carried on war as they pleased. In a passage suppressed by Mr. Sparks, Washington said: "There is no such thing as getting officers of this stamp to carry orders into execution — to curry favor with the men (by whom they were chosen, and on whose smile they may possibly think that they may again rely) seems to be one of the principal objects of their attention. I have made a pretty good slam amongst such kind of officers as the Massachusetts government abounds in, since I came into this camp, having broke one colonel and two captains for cowardly behavior in the action on Bunker Hill, two captains for drawing more pay and provisions than they had men in their company, and one for being absent from his post when the enemy appeared there and burnt a house just by it. Besides these I have at this time one colonel, one major, one captain, and two subalterns under arrest for trial. In short, I spare none, and yet fear it will not all do, as these people seem to be too attentive to everything but their own interests." This may be plain and homely in phrase, but it is not stilted, and the quick energy of the words shows how the New England farmers and fishermen were being rapidly brought to discipline. Bringing the army into order, however, was but a small part of his duties. It is necessary to run over all his difficulties, great and small, at this time, and count them up, in order to gain a just idea of the force and capacity of the man who overcame them.

Washington, in the first place, was obliged to deal not only with his army, but with the general congress and the congress of the province. He had to teach them, utterly ignorant as they were of the needs and details of war, how to organize and supply their armies. There was no commissary department, there were no uniforms, no arrangements for ammunition, no small arms, no cannon, no resources to draw upon for all these necessaries of war. Little by little he taught Congress to provide after a fashion for these things, little by little he developed what he needed, and by his own ingenuity, and by seizing alertly every suggestion from others, he supplied for better or worse one deficiency after another. He had to deal with various governors and various colonies, each with its prejudices, jealousies, and shortcomings. He had to arrange for new levies from a people unused to war, and to settle with infinite anxiety and much wear and tear of mind and body, the conflict as to rank among officers to whom he could apply no test but his own insight. He had to organize and stimulate the arming of privateers, which, by preying on British commerce, were destined to exercise such a powerful influence on the fate of the war. It was neither showy nor attractive, such work as this, but it was very vital, and it was done.

By the end of July the army was in a better posture of defense; and then at the beginning of the next month, as the prospect was brightening,

it was suddenly discovered that there was no gunpowder. An undrilled army, imperfectly organized, was facing a disciplined force and had only some nine rounds in the cartridge-boxes. Yet there is no quivering in the letters from headquarters. Anxiety and strain of nerve are apparent; but a resolute determination rises over all, supported by a ready fertility of resource. Couriers flew over the country asking for powder in every town and in every village. A vessel was even dispatched to the Bermudas to seize there a supply of powder, of which the general, always listening, had heard. Thus the immediate and grinding pressure was presently relieved, but the staple of war still remained pitifully and perilously meagre all through the winter.

Meantime, while thus overwhelmed with the cares immediately about him, Washington was watching the rest of the country. He had a keen eye upon Johnson and his Indians in the valley of the Mohawk; he followed sharply every movement of Tryon and the Tories in New York; he refused with stern good sense to detach troops to Connecticut and Long Island, knowing well when to give and when to say No, a difficult monosyllable for the new general of freshly revolted colonies. But if he would not detach in one place, he was ready enough to do so in another. He sent one expedition by Lake Champlain, under Montgomery, to Montreal, and gave Arnold picked troops to march through the wilds of Maine and

strike Quebec. The scheme was bold and brilliant, both in conception and in execution, and came very near severing Canada forever from the British crown. A chapter of little accidents, each one of which proved as fatal as it was unavoidable, a moment's delay on the Plains of Abraham, and the whole campaign failed; but there was a grasp of conditions, a clearness of perception, and a comprehensiveness about the plan, which stamp it as the work of a great soldier, who saw besides the military importance, the enormous political value held out by the chance of such a victory.

The daring, far-reaching quality of this Canadian expedition was much more congenial to Washington's temper and character than the wearing work of the siege. All that man could do before Boston was done, and still Congress expected the impossible, and grumbled because without ships he did not secure the harbor. He himself, while he inwardly resented such criticism, chafed under the monotonous drudgery of the intrenchments. He was longing, according to his nature, to fight, and was, it must be confessed, quite ready to attempt the impossible in his own way. Early in September he proposed to attack the town in boats and by the neck of land at Roxbury, but the council of officers unanimously voted against him. A little more than a month later he planned another attack, and was again voted down by his officers. Councils of war never fight, it is said, and perhaps in this case it was well that

such was their habit, for the schemes look rather desperate now. To us they serve to show the temper of the man, and also his self-control in this respect at the beginning of the war, for Washington became ready enough afterwards to override councils when he was wholly free from doubt himself.

Thus the planning of campaigns, both distant and near, went on, and at the same time the current of details, difficult, vital, absolute in demanding prompt and vigorous solution, went on too. The existence of war made it necessary to fix our relations with our enemies, and that these relations should be rightly settled was of vast moment to our cause, struggling for recognition. The first question was the matter of prisoners, and on August 11 Washington wrote to Gage: —

"I understand that the officers engaged in the cause of liberty and their country, who by the fortune of war have fallen into your hands, have been thrown indiscriminately into a common gaol appropriated for felons; that no consideration has been had for those of the most respectable rank, when languishing with wounds and sickness; and that some have been even amputated in this unworthy situation.

"Let your opinion, sir, of the principle which actuates them be what it may, they suppose that they act from the noblest of all principles, a love of freedom and their country. But political principles, I conceive, are foreign to this point. The

obligations arising from the rights of humanity and claims of rank are universally binding and extensive, except in case of retaliation. These, I should have hoped, would have dictated a more tender treatment of those individuals whom chance or war had put in your power. Nor can I forbear suggesting its fatal tendency to widen that unhappy breach which you, and those ministers under whom you act, have repeatedly declared your wish is to see forever closed.

"My duty now makes it necessary to apprise you, that for the future I shall regulate all my conduct towards those gentlemen who are or may be in our possession, exactly by the rule you shall observe towards those of ours now in your custody.

"If severity and hardship mark the line of your conduct, painful as it may be to me, your prisoners will feel its effects. But if kindness and humanity are shown to ours, I shall with pleasure consider those in our hands only as unfortunate, and they shall receive from me that treatment to which the unfortunate are ever entitled."

This is a letter worthy of a little study. The affair does not look very important now, but it went then to the roots of things; for this letter would go out to the world, and America and the American cause would be judged by their leader. A little bluster or ferocity, any fine writing, or any absurdity, and the world would have sneered, condemned, or laughed. But no man could read

this letter and fail to perceive that here was dignity and force, justice and sense, with just a touch of pathos and eloquence to recommend it to the heart. Men might differ with the writer, but they could neither laugh at him nor set him aside.

Gage replied after his kind. He was an inconsiderable person, dull and well meaning, intended for the command of a garrison town, and terribly twisted and torn by the great events in which he was momentarily caught. His masters were stupid and arrogant, and he imitated them with perfect success, except that arrogance with him dwindled to impertinence. He answered Washington's letter with denials and recriminations, lectured the American general on the political situation, and talked about "usurped authority," "rebels," "criminals," and persons destined to the "cord." Washington, being a man of his word, proceeded to put some English prisoners into jail, and then wrote a second note, giving Gage a little lesson in manners, with the vain hope of making him see that gentlemen did not scold and vituperate because they fought. He restated his case calmly and coolly, as before, informed Gage that he had investigated the counter-charge of cruelty and found it without any foundation, and then continued: "You advise me to give free operation to truth, and to punish misrepresentation and falsehood. If experience stamps value upon counsel, yours must have a weight which few can claim. You best can tell how far the convulsion, which

has brought such ruin on both countries, and shaken the mighty empire of Britain to its foundation, may be traced to these malignant causes.

"You affect, sir, to despise all rank not derived from the same source with your own. I cannot conceive one more honorable than that which flows from the uncorrupted choice of a brave and free people, the purest source and original fountain of all power. Far from making it a plea for cruelty, a mind of true magnanimity and enlarged ideas would comprehend and respect it."

Washington had grasped instinctively the general truth that Englishmen are prone to mistake civility for servility, and become offensive, whereas if they are treated with indifference, rebuke, or even rudeness, they are apt to be respectful and polite. He was obliged to go over the same ground with Sir William Howe, a little later, and still more sharply; and this matter of prisoners recurred, although at longer and longer intervals, throughout the war. But as the British generals saw their officers go to jail, and found that their impudence and assumption were met by keen reproofs, they gradually comprehended that Washington was not a man to be trifled with, and that in him was a pride and dignity out-topping theirs and far stronger, because grounded on responsibility borne and work done, and on the deep sense of a great and righteous cause.

It was probably a pleasure and a relief to give to Gage and Sir William Howe a little instruction

in military behavior and general good manners, but there was nothing save infinite vexation in dealing with the difficulties arising on the American side of the line. As the days shortened and the leaves fell, Washington saw before him a New England winter, with no clothing and no money for his troops. Through long letters to Congress, and strenuous personal efforts, these wants were somehow supplied. Then the men began to get restless and homesick, and both privates and officers would disappear to their farms, which Washington, always impatient of wrongdoing, styled "base and pernicious conduct," and punished accordingly. By and by the terms of enlistment ran out and the regiments began to melt away even before the proper date. Recruiting was carried on slowly and with difficulty, new levies were tardy in coming in, and Congress could not be persuaded to stop limited enlistments. Still the task was done. The old army departed and a new one arose in its place, the posts were strengthened and ammunition secured.

Among these reinforcements came some Virginia riflemen, and it must have warmed Washington's heart to see once more these brave and hardy fighters in the familiar hunting shirt and leggins. They certainly made him warm in a very different sense by getting into a rough-and-tumble fight one winter's day with some Marblehead fishermen. The quarrel was at its height, when suddenly into the brawl rode the commander-in-chief.

He quickly dismounted, seized two of the combatants, shook them, berated them, if tradition may be trusted, for their local jealousies, and so with strong arm quelled the disturbance. He must have longed to take more than one colonial governor or magnate by the throat and shake him soundly, as he did his soldiers from the woods of Virginia and the rocks of Marblehead, for to his temper there was nothing so satisfying as rapid and decisive action. But he could not quell governors and assemblies in this way, and yet he managed them and got what he wanted with a patience and tact which it must have been in the last degree trying to him to practice, gifted as he was with a nature at once masterful and passionate.

Another trial was brought about by his securing and sending out privateers which did good service. They brought in many valuable prizes which caused infinite trouble, and forced Washington not only to be a naval secretary, but also made him a species of admiralty judge. He implored the slow-moving Congress to relieve him from this burden, and suggested a plan which led to the formation of special committees and was the origin of the Federal judiciary of the United States. Besides the local jealousies and the personal jealousies, and the privateers and their prizes, he had to meet also the greed and selfishness as well of the money-making, stock-jobbing spirit which springs up rankly under the influence

of army contracts and large expenditures among a people accustomed to trade and unused to war. Washington wrote savagely of these practices, but still, despite all hindrances and annoyances, he kept moving straight on to his object.

In the midst of his labors, harassed and tried in all ways, he was assailed as usual by complaint and criticism. Some of it came to him through his friend and aide, Joseph Reed, to whom he wrote in reply one of the noblest letters ever penned by a great man struggling with adverse circumstances and wringing victory from grudging fortune. He said that he was always ready to welcome criticism, hear advice, and learn the opinion of the world. "For as I have but one capital object in view, I could wish to make my conduct coincide with the wishes of mankind, as far as I can consistently; I mean, without departing from that great line of duty which, though hid under a cloud for some time, from a peculiarity of circumstances, may, nevertheless, bear a scrutiny." Thus he held fast to "the great line of duty," though bitterly tried the while by the news from Canada, where brilliant beginnings were coming to dismal endings, and cheered only by the arrival of his wife, who drove up one day in her coach and four, with the horses ridden by black postilions in scarlet and white liveries, much to the amazement, no doubt, of the sober-minded New England folk.

Light, however, finally began to break on the

work about him. Henry Knox, sent out for that purpose, returned safely with the guns captured at Ticonderoga, and thus heavy ordnance and gunpowder were obtained. By the middle of February the harbor was frozen over, and Washington arranged to cross the ice and carry Boston by storm. Again he was held back by his council, but this time he could not be stopped. If he could not cross the ice he would go by land. He had been slowly but surely advancing his works all winter, and now he determined on a decisive stroke. On the evening of Monday, March 4, under cover of a heavy bombardment which distracted the enemy's attention, he marched a large body of troops to Dorchester Heights and began to throw up redoubts. The work went forward rapidly, and Washington rode about all night encouraging the men. The New England soldiers had sorely tried his temper, and there were many severe attacks and bitter criticisms upon them in his letters, which were suppressed or smoothed over for the most part by Mr. Sparks, but which have come to light since, as is sometimes the case with facts. Gradually, however, the General had come to know his soldiers better, and six months later he wrote to Lund Washington, praising his northern troops in the highest terms. Even now he understood them as never before, and as he watched them on that raw March night, working with the energy and quick intelligence of their race, he probably felt that the defects were super-

ficial, but the virtues, the tenacity, and the courage were lasting and strong.

When day dawned, and the British caught sight of the formidable works which had sprung up in the night, there was a great excitement and running hither and thither in the town. Still the men on the heights worked on, and still Washington rode back and forth among them. He was stirred and greatly rejoiced at the coming of the fight, which he now believed inevitable, and as always, when he was deeply moved, the hidden springs of sentiment and passion were opened, and he reminded his soldiers that it was the anniversary of the Boston massacre, and appealed to them by the memories of that day to prepare for battle with the enemy. As with the Huguenots at Ivry,—

"Remember St. Bartholomew was passed from man to man."

But the fighting never came. The British troops were made ready, then a gale arose and they could not cross the bay. The next day it rained in torrents, and the next day it was too late. The American intrenchments frowned threateningly above the town, and began to send in certain ominous messengers in the shape of shot and shell. The place was now so clearly untenable that Howe determined to evacuate it. An informal request to allow the troops to depart unmolested was not answered, but Washington suspended his fire and the British made ready to

withdraw. Still they hesitated and delayed, until Washington again advanced his works, and on this hint they started in earnest, on March 17, amid confusion, pillage, and disorder, leaving cannon and much else behind them, and seeking refuge in their ships.

All was over, and the town was in the hands of the Americans. In Washington's own words, "To maintain a post within musket-shot of the enemy for six months together, without powder, and at the same time to disband one army and recruit another within that distance of twenty-odd British regiments, is more, probably, than ever was attempted." It was, in truth, a gallant feat of arms, carried through by the resolute will and strong brain of one man. The troops on both sides were brave, but the British had advantages far more than compensating for a disparity of numbers, always slight and often more imaginary than real. They had twelve thousand men, experienced, disciplined, equipped, and thoroughly supplied. They had the best arms and cannon and gunpowder. They commanded the sea with a strong fleet, and they were concentrated on the inside line, able to strike with suddenness and overwhelming force at any point of widely extended posts. Washington caught them with an iron grip and tightened it steadily until, in disorderly haste, they took to their boats without even striking a blow. Washington's great abilities, and the incapacity of the generals opposed to

him, were the causes of this result. If Robert Clive, for instance, had chanced to have been there the end might possibly have been the same, but there would have been some bloody fighting before that end was reached. The explanation of the feeble abandonment of Boston lies in the stupidity of the English government, which had sown the wind and then proceeded to handle the customary crop with equal fatuity.

There were plenty of great men in England, but they were not conducting her government or her armies. Lord Sandwich had declared in the House of Lords that all "Yankees were cowards," a simple and satisfactory statement, readily accepted by the governing classes, and flung in the teeth of the British soldiers as they fell back twice from the bloody slopes of Bunker Hill. Acting on this pleasant idea, England sent out as commanders of her American army a parcel of ministerial and court favorites, thoroughly second-rate men, to whom was confided the task of beating one of the best soldiers and hardest fighters of the century. Despite the enormous material odds in favor of Great Britain, the natural result of matching the Howes and Gages and Clintons against George Washington ensued, and the first lesson was taught by the evacuation of Boston.

Washington did not linger over his victory. Even while the British fleet still hung about the harbor he began to send troops to New York to make ready for the next attack. He entered

Boston in order to see that every precaution was taken against the spread of the smallpox, and then prepared to depart himself. Two ideas, during his first winter of conflict, had taken possession of his mind, and undoubtedly influenced profoundly his future course. One was the conviction that the struggle must be fought out to the bitter end, and must bring either subjugation or complete independence. He wrote in February: "With respect to myself, I have never entertained an idea of an accommodation, since I heard of the measures which were adopted in consequence of the Bunker's Hill fight;" and at an earlier date he said: "I hope my countrymen (of Virginia) will rise superior to any losses the whole navy of Great Britain can bring on them, and that the destruction of Norfolk and threatened devastation of other places will have no other effect than to unite the whole country in one indissoluble band against a nation which seems to be lost to every sense of virtue and those feelings which distinguish a civilized people from the most barbarous savages." With such thoughts he sought to make Congress appreciate the probable long duration of the struggle, and he bent every energy to giving permanency to his army, and decisiveness to each campaign. The other idea which had grown in his mind during the weary siege was that the Tories were thoroughly dangerous and deserved scant mercy. In his second letter to Gage he refers to them, with the frankness which charac-

terized him when he felt strongly, as "execrable parricides," and he made ready to treat them with the utmost severity at New York and elsewhere. When Washington was aroused there was a stern and relentless side to his character, in keeping with the force and strength which were his chief qualities. His attitude on this point seems harsh now when the old Tories no longer look very dreadful and we can appreciate the sincerity of conviction which no doubt controlled most of them. But they were dangerous then, and Washington, with his honest hatred of all that seemed to him to partake of meanness or treason, proposed to put them down and render them harmless, being well convinced, after his clear-sighted fashion, that war was not peace, and that mildness to domestic foes was sadly misplaced.

His errand to New England was now done and well done. His victory was won, everything was settled at Boston; and so, having sent his army forward, he started for New York, to meet the harder trials that still awaited him.

CHAPTER VI

SAVING THE REVOLUTION

After leaving Boston, Washington proceeded through Rhode Island and Connecticut, pushing troops forward as he advanced, and reached New York on April 13. There he found himself plunged at once into the same sea of difficulties with which he had been struggling at Boston, the only difference being that these were fresh and entirely untouched. The army was inadequate, and the town, which was the central point of the colonies, as well as the great river at its side, was wholly unprotected. The troops were in large measure raw and undrilled, the committee of safety was hesitating, the Tories were virulent and active, corresponding constantly with Tryon, who was lurking in a British man-of-war, while from the north came tidings of retreat and disaster. All these harassing difficulties crowded upon the commander-in-chief as soon as he arrived. To appreciate him it is necessary to understand these conditions and realize their weight and consequence, albeit the details seem petty. When we comprehend the difficulties, then we can see plainly the greatness of the man who quietly and

silently took them up and disposed of them. Some he scotched and some he killed, but he dealt with them all after a fashion sufficient to enable him to move steadily forward. In his presence the provincial committee suddenly stiffened and grew strong. All correspondence with Tryon was cut off, the Tories were repressed, and on Long Island steps were taken to root out "these abominable pests of society," as the commander-in-chief called them in his plain-spoken way. Then forts were built, soldiers energetically recruited and drilled, arrangements made for prisoners, and despite all the present cares anxious thought was given to the Canada campaign, and ideas and expeditions, orders, suggestions, and encouragement were freely furnished to the dispirited generals and broken forces of the north.

One matter, however, overshadowed all others. Nearly a year before, Washington had seen that there was no prospect or possibility of accommodation with Great Britain. It was plain to his mind that the struggle was final in its character and would be decisive. Separation from the mother country, therefore, ought to come at once, so that public opinion might be concentrated, and above all, permanency ought to be given to the army. These ideas he had been striving to impress upon Congress, for the most part less clear-sighted than he was as to facts, and as the months slipped by his letters had grown constantly more earnest and more vehement. Still Congress

hesitated, and at last Washington went himself to Philadelphia and held conferences with the principal men. What he said is lost, but the tone of Congress certainly rose after his visit. The aggressive leaders found their hands so much strengthened that little more than a month later they carried through a declaration of independence, which was solemnly and gratefully proclaimed to the army by the general, much relieved to have got through the necessary boat-burning, and to have brought affairs, military and political, on to the hard ground of actual fact.

Soon after his return from Philadelphia, he received convincing proof that his views in regard to the Tories were extremely sound. A conspiracy devised by Tryon, which aimed apparently at the assassination of the commander-in-chief, and which had corrupted his life-guards for that purpose, was discovered and scattered before it had fairly hardened into definite form. The mayor of the city and various other persons were seized and thrown into prison, and one of the life-guards, Thomas Hickey by name, who was the principal tool in the plot, was hanged in the presence of a large concourse of people. Washington wrote a brief and business-like account of the affair to Congress, from which one would hardly suppose that his own life had been aimed at. It is a curious instance of his cool indifference to personal danger. The conspiracy had failed, that was sufficient for him, and he had other things besides

himself to consider. "We expect a bloody summer in New York and Canada," he wrote to his brother, and even while the Canadian expedition was coming to a disastrous close, and was bringing hostile invasion instead of the hoped-for conquest, British men-of-war were arriving daily in the harbor, and a large army was collecting on Staten Island. The rejoicings over the Declaration of Independence had hardly died away, when the vessels of the enemy made their way up the Hudson without check from the embryo forts, or the obstacles placed in the stream.

July 12 Lord Howe arrived with more troops, and also with ample powers to pardon and negotiate. Almost immediately he tried to open a correspondence with Washington, but Colonel Reed, in behalf of the General, refused to receive the letter addressed to "Mr. Washington." Then Lord Howe sent an officer to the American camp with a second letter, addressed to "George Washington, Esq., etc., etc." The bearer was courteously received, but the letter was declined. "The etc., etc. implies everything," said the Englishman. It may also mean "anything," Washington replied, and added that touching the pardoning power of Lord Howe there could be no pardon where there was no guilt, and where no forgiveness was asked. As a result of these interviews, Lord Howe wrote to England that it would be well to give Mr. Washington his proper title. A small question, apparently, this of the form of

address, especially to a lover of facts, and yet it was in reality of genuine importance. To the world Washington represented the young republic, and he was determined to extort from England the first acknowledgment of independence by compelling her to recognize the Americans as belligerents and not rebels. Washington cared as little for vain shows as any man who ever lived, but he had the highest sense of personal dignity, and of the dignity of his cause and country. Neither should be allowed to suffer in his hands. He appreciated the effect on mankind of forms and titles, and with unerring judgment he insisted on what he knew to be of real value. It is one of the earliest examples of the dignity and good taste which were of such inestimable value to his country.

He had abundant occasion also for the employment of these same qualities, coupled with unwearied patience and tact, in dealing with his own men. The present army was drawn from a wider range than that which had taken Boston, and sectional jealousies and disputes, growing every day more hateful to the commander-in-chief, sprang up rankly. The men of Maryland thought those of Connecticut ploughboys; the latter held the former to be fops and dandies. These and a hundred other disputes buzzed and whirled about Washington, stirring his strong temper, and exercising his sternest self-control in the untiring effort to suppress them and put them to death.

"It requires," John Adams truly said, "more serenity of temper, a deeper understanding, and more courage than fell to the lot of Marlborough, to ride in this whirlwind." Fortunately these qualities were all there, and with them an honesty of purpose and an unbending directness of character to which Anne's great general was a stranger.

Meantime, while the internal difficulties were slowly diminished, the forces of the enemy rapidly increased. First it became evident that attacks were not feasible. Then the question changed to a mere choice of defenses. Even as to this there was great and harassing doubt, for the enemy, having command of the water, could concentrate and attack at any point they pleased. Moreover, the British had thirty thousand of the best disciplined and best equipped troops that Europe could furnish, while Washington had some twenty thousand men, one fourth of whom were unfit for duty, and with the remaining three fourths, raw recruits for the most part, he was obliged to defend an extended line of posts, without cavalry, and with no means for rapid concentration. Had he been governed solely by military considerations he would have removed the inhabitants, burned New York, and drawing his forces together would have taken up a secure post of observation. To have destroyed the town, however, not only would have frightened the timid and the doubters, and driven them over to the Tories, but would have dispirited the patriots not yet alive to the exigencies of war,

and deeply injured the American cause. That Washington well understood the need of such action is clear, both from the current rumors that the town was to be burned, and from his expressed desire to remove the women and children from New York. But political considerations overruled the military necessity, and he spared the town. It was bad enough to be thus hampered, but he was even more fettered in other ways, for he could not even concentrate his forces and withdraw to the Highlands without a battle, as he was obliged to fight in order to sustain public feeling, and thus he was driven on to almost sure defeat. With Brooklyn Heights in the hands of the enemy New York was untenable, and yet it was obvious that to hold Brooklyn when the enemy controlled the sea was inviting defeat. Yet Washington under the existing conditions had no choice except to fight on Long Island and to say that he hoped to make a good defense.

Everything, too, as the day of battle drew near, seemed to make against him. On August 22 the enemy began to land on Long Island, where Greene had drawn a strong line of redoubts behind the village of Brooklyn, to defend the heights which commanded New York, and had made every arrangement to protect the three roads through the wooded hills, about a mile from the intrenchments. Most unfortunately, and just at the critical moment, Greene was taken down with a raging fever, so that when Washington came over

on the 24th he found much confusion in the camps, which he repressed as best he could, and then prepared for the attack. Greene's illness, however, had caused some oversights which were unknown to the commander-in-chief, and which, as it turned out, proved fatal.

After indecisive skirmishing for two or three days, the British started early on the morning of the 26th. They had nine thousand men and were well informed as to the country. Advancing through woodpaths and lanes, they came round to the left flank of the Americans. One of the roads through the hills was unguarded, the others feebly protected. The result is soon told. The Americans, out-generaled and out-flanked, were taken by surprise and surrounded, Sullivan and his division were cut off, and then Lord Stirling. There was some desperate fighting, and the Americans showed plenty of courage, but only a few forced their way out. Most of them were killed or taken prisoners, the total loss out of some five thousand men reaching as high as two thousand.

From the redoubts, whither he had come at the sound of the firing, Washington watched the slaughter and disaster in grim silence. He saw the British troops, flushed with victory, press on to the very edge of his works and then withdraw in obedience to command. The British generals had their prey so surely, as they believed, that they mercifully decided not to waste life unnecessarily by storming the works in the first glow

of success. So they waited during that night and the two following days, while Washington strengthened his intrenchments, brought over reinforcements, and prepared for the worst. On the 29th it became apparent that there was a movement in the fleet, and that arrangements were being made to take the Americans in the rear and wholly cut them off. It was an obvious and sensible plan, but the British overlooked the fact that while they were lingering, summing up their victory, and counting the future as assured, there was a silent watchful man on the other side of the redoubts who for forty-eight hours never left the lines, and who with a great capacity for stubborn fighting could move, when the stress came, with the celerity and stealth of a panther.

Washington swiftly determined to retreat. It was a desperate undertaking, and a lesser man would have hesitated and been lost. He had to transport nine thousand men across a strait of strong tides and currents, and three quarters of a mile in width. It was necessary to collect the boats from a distance, and do it all within sight and hearing of the enemy. The boats were obtained, a thick mist settled down on sea and land, the water was calm, and as the night wore away, the entire army with all its arms and baggage was carried over, Washington leaving in the last boat. At daybreak the British awoke, but it was too late. They had fought a successful battle, they had had the American army in their grasp,

and now all was over. The victory had melted away, and, as a grand result, they had a few hundred prisoners, a stray boat with three camp-followers, and the deserted works in which they stood. To grasp so surely the happy chance of wind and weather and make such a retreat as this was a feat of arms as great as most victories, and in it we see, perhaps as plainly as anywhere, the nerve and quickness of the man who conducted it. It is true, it was the only chance of salvation, but the great man is he who is entirely master of his opportunity, even if he have but one.

The outlook, nevertheless, was, as Washington wrote, "truly distressing." The troops were dispirited, and the militia began to disappear, as they always did after a defeat. Congress would not permit the destruction of the city, different interests pulled in different directions, conflicting opinions distracted the councils of war, and, with utter inability to predict the enemy's movements, everything led to halfway measures and to intense anxiety, while Lord Howe tried to negotiate with Congress, and the Americans waited for events. Washington, looking beyond the confusion of the moment, saw that he had gained much by delay, and had his own plan well defined. He wrote: "We have not only delayed the operations of the campaign till it is too late to effect any capital incursion into the country, but have drawn the enemy's forces to one point. . . . It would be presumption to draw out our young troops into open

ground against their superiors both in number and discipline, and I have never spared the spade and pickaxe." Every one else, however, saw only past defeat and present peril.

The British ships gradually made their way up the river, until it became apparent that they intended to surround and cut off the American army. Washington made preparations to withdraw, but uncertainty of information came near rendering his precautions futile. September 15 the men-of-war opened fire, and troops were landed near Kip's Bay. The militia in the breastworks at that point had been at Brooklyn and gave way at once, communicating their panic to two Connecticut regiments. Washington, galloping down to the scene of battle, came upon the disordered and flying troops. He dashed in among them, conjuring them to stop, but even while he was trying to rally them they broke again on the appearance of some sixty or seventy of the enemy, and ran in all directions. In a tempest of anger Washington drew his pistols, struck the fugitives with his sword, and was only forced from the field by one of his officers seizing the bridle of his horse and dragging him away from the British, now within a hundred yards of the spot.

Through all his trials and anxieties Washington always showed the broadest and most generous sympathy. When the militia had begun to leave him a few days before, although he despised their action and protested bitterly to Congress against

their employment, yet in his letters he displayed a keen appreciation of their feelings, and saw plainly every palliation and excuse. But there was one thing which he could never appreciate nor realize. It was from first to last impossible for him to understand how any man could refuse to fight, or could think of running away. When he beheld rout and cowardly panic before his very eyes, his temper broke loose and ran uncontrolled. His one thought then was to fight to the last, and he would have thrown himself single-handed on the enemy, with all his wisdom and prudence flung to the winds. The day when the commander held his place merely by virtue of personal prowess lay far back in the centuries, and no one knew it better than Washington. But the old fighting spirit awoke within him when the clash of arms sounded in his ears, and though we may know the general in the tent and in the council, we can only know the man when he breaks out from all rules and customs, and shows the rage of battle, and the indomitable eagerness for the fray, which lie at the bottom of the tenacity and courage that carried the war for independence to a triumphant close.

The rout and panic over, Washington quickly turned to deal with the pressing danger. With coolness and quickness he issued his orders, and succeeded in getting his army off, Putnam's division escaping most narrowly. He then took post at King's Bridge, and began to strengthen and

fortify his lines. While thus engaged, the enemy advanced, and on the 16th Washington suddenly took the offensive and attacked the British light troops. The result was a sharp skirmish, in which the British were driven back with serious loss, and great bravery was shown by the Connecticut and Virginia troops, the two commanding officers being killed. This affair, which was the first gleam of success, encouraged the troops, and was turned to the best account by the general. Still a successful skirmish did not touch the essential difficulties of the situation, which then as always came from within, rather than without. To face and check twenty-five thousand well-equipped and highly disciplined soldiers Washington had now some twelve thousand men, lacking in everything which goes to make an army, except mere individual courage and a high average of intelligence. Even this meagre force was an inconstant and diminishing quantity, shifting, uncertain, and always threatening dissolution.

The task of facing and fighting the enemy was enough for the ablest of men; but Washington was obliged also to combat and overcome the inertness and dullness born of ignorance, and to teach Congress how to govern a nation at war. In the hours "allotted to sleep," he sat in his headquarters, writing a letter, with "blots and scratches," which told Congress with the utmost precision and vigor just what was needed. It was but one of a long series of similar letters, written

with unconquerable patience and with unwearied iteration, lighted here and there by flashes of deep and angry feeling, which would finally strike home under the pressure of defeat, and bring the patriots of the legislature to sudden action, always incomplete, but still action of some sort. It must have been inexpressibly dreary work, but quite as much was due to those letters as to the battles. Thinking for other people, and teaching them what to do, is at best an ungrateful duty, but when it is done while an enemy is at your throat, it shows a grim tenacity of purpose which is well worth consideration.

In this instance the letter of September 24, read in the light of the battles of Long Island and Kip's Bay, had a considerable effect. The first steps were taken to make the army national and permanent, to raise the pay of officers, and to lengthen enlistments. Like most of the war measures of Congress, they were too late for the immediate necessity, but they helped the future. Congress, moreover, then felt that all had been done that could be demanded, and relapsed once more into confidence. "The British force," said John Adams, chairman of the board of war, "is so divided, they will do no great matter this fall." But Washington, facing hard facts, wrote to Congress with his unsparing truth on October 4: "Give me leave to say, sir, (I say it with due deference and respect, and my knowledge of the facts, added to the importance of the cause and

the stake I hold in it, must justify the freedom,) that your affairs are in a more unpromising way than you seem to apprehend. Your army, as I mentioned in my last, is on the eve of its political dissolution. True it is, you have voted a larger one in lieu of it; but the season is late; and there is a material difference between voting battalions and raising men."

The campaign as seen from the board of war and from the Plains of Harlem differed widely. It is needless to say now which was correct; every one knows that the General was right and Congress wrong, but being in the right did not help Washington, nor did he take petty pleasure in being able to say, "I told you how it would be." The hard facts remained unchanged. There was the wholly patriotic but slumberous, and for fighting purposes quite inefficient Congress still to be waked up and kept awake, and to be instructed. With painful and plain-spoken repetition this work was grappled with and done methodically, and like all else as effectively as was possible.

Meanwhile the days slipped along, and Washington waited on the Harlem Plains, planning descents on Long Island, and determining to make a desperate stand where he was, unless the situation decidedly changed. Then the situation did change, as neither he nor any one else apparently had anticipated. The British warships came up the Hudson past the forts, brushing aside our boasted obstructions, destroying our

little fleet, and getting command of the river. Then General Howe landed at Frog's Point, where he was checked for the moment by the good disposition of Heath, under Washington's direction. These two events made it evident that the situation of the American army was full of peril, and that retreat was again necessary. Such certainly was the conclusion of the council of war, on the 16th, acting this time in agreement with their chief. Six days Howe lingered on Frog's Point, bringing up stores or artillery or something; it matters little now why he tarried. Suffice it that he waited, and gave six days to his opponent. They were of little value to Howe, but they were of inestimable worth to Washington, who employed them in getting everything in readiness, in holding his council of war, and then on the 17th in moving deliberately off to very strong ground at White Plains. On his way he fought two or three slight, sharp, and successful skirmishes with the British. Sir William followed closely, but with much caution, having now a dull glimmer in his mind that at the head of the raw troops in front of him was a man with whom it was not safe to be entirely careless.

On the 28th, Howe came up to Washington's position, and found the Americans quite equal in numbers, strongly intrenched, and awaiting his attack with confidence. He hesitated, doubted, and finally feeling that he must do something, sent four thousand men to storm Chatterton Hill,

an outlying post, where some fourteen hundred Americans were stationed. There was a short, sharp action, and then the Americans retreated in good order to the main army, having lost less than half as many men as their opponents. With caution now much enlarged, Howe sent for reinforcements, and waited two days. The third day it rained, and on the fourth Howe found that Washington had withdrawn to a higher and quite impregnable line of hills, where he held all the passes in the rear and awaited a second attack. Howe contemplated the situation for two or three days longer, and then broke camp and withdrew to Dobbs Ferry to secure Fort Washington, which treachery offered him as an easy and inviting prize. Such were the great results of the victory of Long Island, two wasted months, and the American army still untouched.

Howe was resolved that his campaign should not be utterly fruitless, and therefore directed his attention to the defenses of the Hudson, and here he met with better success. Congress, in its military wisdom, had insisted that these forts must and could be held. So thought the generals, and so most especially, and most unluckily, did Greene. Washington, with his usual accurate and keen perception, saw, from the time the men-of-war came up the Hudson, and, now that the British army was free, more clearly than ever, that both forts ought to be abandoned. Sure of his ground, he overruled Congress, but was so far in-

fluenced by Greene that he gave to that officer discretionary orders as to withdrawal. This was an act of weakness, as he afterwards admitted, for which he bitterly reproached himself, never confusing or glossing over his own errors, but loyal there, as elsewhere, to facts. An attempt was made to hold both forts, and both were lost, as he had foreseen. From Fort Lee the garrison withdrew in safety. Fort Washington, with its plans all in Howe's hands through the treachery of William Demont, the adjutant of Colonel Magaw, was carried by storm, after a severe struggle. Twenty-six hundred men and all the munitions of war fell into the hands of the enemy. It was a serious and most depressing loss, and was felt throughout the continent.

Meantime Washington had crossed into the Jerseys, and, after the loss of Fort Lee, began to retreat before the British, who, flushed with victory, now advanced rapidly under Lord Cornwallis. The crisis of his fate and of the Revolution was upon him. His army was melting away. The militia had almost all disappeared, and regiments whose term of enlistment had expired were departing daily. Lee, who had a division under his command, was ordered to come up, but paid no attention, although the orders were repeated almost every day for a month. He lingered, and loitered, and excused himself, and at last was taken prisoner. This disposed of him for a time very satisfactorily, but meanwhile he had succeeded in keep-

ing his troops from Washington, which was a most serious misfortune.

On December 2 Washington was at Princeton with three thousand ragged men, and the British close upon his heels. They had him now surely in their grip. There could be no mistake this time, and there was therefore no need of a forced march. But they had not yet learned that to Washington even hours meant much, and when, after duly resting, they reached the Delaware, they found the Americans on the other side, and all the boats destroyed for a distance of seventy miles.

It was winter now, the short gray days had come, and with them piercing cold and storms of sleet and ice. It seemed as if the elements alone would finally disperse the feeble body of men still gathered about the commander-in-chief. Congress had sent him blank commissions and orders to recruit, which were well meant, but were not practically of much value. As Glendower could call spirits from the vasty deep, so they, with like success, sought to call soldiers from the earth in the midst of defeat, and in the teeth of a North American winter. Washington, baffling pursuit and flying from town to town, left nothing undone. North and south went letters and appeals for men, money, and supplies. Vain, very vain, it all was, for the most part, but still it was done in a tenacious spirit. Lee would not come, the Jersey militia would not turn out, thousands

began to accept Howe's amnesty, and signs of wavering were apparent in some of the Middle States. Philadelphia was threatened, Newport was in the hands of the enemy, and for ninety miles Washington had retreated, evading ruin again and again only by the width of a river. Congress voted not to leave Philadelphia, — a fact which their General declined to publish, — and then fled.

No one remained to face the grim realities of the time but Washington, and he met them unmoved. Not a moment passed that he did not seek in some way to effect something. Not an hour went by that he did not turn calmly from fresh and ever renewed disappointment to work and action.

By the middle of December Howe felt satisfied that the American army would soon dissolve, and leaving strong detachments in various posts he withdrew to New York. His premises were sound, and his conclusions logical, but he made his usual mistake of overlooking and underestimating the American general. No sooner was it known that he was on his way to New York than Washington, at the head of his dissolving army, resolved to take the offensive and strike an outlying post. In a letter of December 14, the day after Howe began to move, we catch the first glimpse of Trenton. It was a bold spirit which, in the dead of winter, with a broken army, no prospect of reinforcements, and in the midst of a terror-

stricken people, could thus resolve with some four thousand men to attack an army thoroughly appointed, and numbering in all its divisions twenty-five thousand soldiers.

It is well to pause a moment and look at that situation, and at the overwhelming difficulties which hemmed it in, and then try to realize what manner of man he was who rose superior to it, and conquered it. Be it remembered, too, that he never deceived himself, and never for one instant disguised the truth. Two years later he wrote that at this supreme moment, in what were called "the dark days of America," he was never despondent; and this was true enough, for despair was not in his nature. But no delusions lent him courage. On the 18th he wrote to his brother "that if every nerve was not strained to recruit this new army the game was pretty nearly up;" and added, "You can form no idea of the perplexity of my situation. No man, I believe, ever had a greater choice of difficulties, and less means to extricate himself from them. However, under a full persuasion of the justice of our cause, I cannot entertain an idea that it will finally sink, though it may remain for some time under a cloud." There is no complaint, no boasting, no despair in this letter. We can detect a bitterness in the references to Congress and to Lee, but the tone of the letter is as calm as a May morning, and it concludes with sending love and good wishes to the writer's sister and her family.

Thus in the dreary winter Washington was planning and devising and sending hither and thither for men, and never ceased through it all to write urgent and ever sharper letters and keep a wary eye upon the future. He not only wrote strongly, but he pledged his own estate and exceeded his powers in desperate efforts to raise money and men. On the 20th he wrote to Congress: "It may be thought that I am going a good deal out of the line of my duty to adopt these measures, or to advise thus freely. A character to lose, an estate to forfeit, the inestimable blessings of liberty at stake, and a life devoted, must be my excuse." Even now across the century these words come with a grave solemnity to our ears, and we can feel as he felt when he alone saw that he stood on the brink of a great crisis. It is an awful thing to know that the life of a nation is at stake, and this thought throbs in his words, measured and quiet as usual, but deeply fraught with much meaning to him and to the world.

By Christmas all was ready, and when the Christian world was rejoicing and feasting, and the British officers in New York and in the New Jersey towns were reveling and laughing, Washington prepared to strike. His whole force, broken into various detachments, was less than six thousand men. To each division was assigned, with provident forethought, its exact part. Nothing was overlooked, nothing omitted; and then

every division commander failed, for good reason or bad, to do his duty. Gates was to march from Bristol with two thousand men, Ewing was to cross at Trenton, Putnam was to come up from Philadelphia, Griffin was to make a diversion against Donop. When the moment came, Gates, disapproving the scheme, was on his way to Congress, and Wilkinson, with his message, found his way to headquarters by following the bloody tracks of the barefooted soldiers. Griffin abandoned New Jersey and fled before Donop. Putnam would not even attempt to leave Philadelphia, and Ewing made no effort to cross at Trenton. Cadwalader, indeed, came down from Bristol, but after looking at the river and the floating ice, gave it up as desperate.

But there was one man who did not hesitate nor give up, nor halt on account of floating ice. With twenty-four hundred hardy veterans, Washington crossed the Delaware. The night was bitter cold and the passage difficult. When they landed, and began their march of nine miles to Trenton, a fierce storm of sleet drove in their faces. Sullivan, marching by the river, sent word that the arms of his men were wet. "Then tell your general," said Washington, "to use the bayonet, for the town must be taken." In broad daylight they came to the town. Washington, at the front and on the right of the line, swept down the Pennington road, and as he drove in the pickets he heard the shouts of Sullivan's men, as,

with Stark leading the van, they charged in from the river. A company of yägers and the light dragoons slipped away, there was a little confused fighting in the streets, Colonel Rahl fell, mortally wounded, his Hessians threw down their arms, and all was over. The battle had been fought and won, and the Revolution was saved.

Taking his thousand prisoners with him, Washington recrossed the Delaware to his old position. Had all done their duty, as he had planned, the British hold on New Jersey would have been shattered. As it was, it was only loosened. Congress, aroused at last, had invested Washington with almost dictatorial powers; but the time for action was short. The army was again melting away, and only by urgent appeals were some veterans retained, and enough new men gathered to make a force of five thousand men. With this army Washington prepared to finish what he had begun.

Trenton struck alarm and dismay into the British, and Cornwallis, with seven thousand of the best troops, started from New York to redeem what had been lost. Leaving three regiments at Princeton, he pushed hotly after Washington, who fell back behind the Assunpink River, skirmishing heavily and successfully. When Cornwallis reached the river he found the American army drawn up on the other side awaiting him. An attack on the bridge was repulsed, and the prospect looked uninviting. Some officers urged

an immediate assault; but night was falling, and Cornwallis, sure of the game, decided to wait till the morrow. He, too, forgot that he was facing an enemy who never overlooked a mistake, and never waited an hour. With quick decision Washington left his camp-fires burning on the river bank, and taking roundabout roads, which he had already reconnoitred, marched on to Princeton. By sunrise he was in the outskirts of the town. Mercer, detached with some three hundred men, fell in with Mawhood's regiment, and a sharp action ensued. Mercer was mortally wounded, and his men gave way just as the main army came upon the field. The British charged, and as the raw Pennsylvanian troops in the van wavered, Washington rode to the front, and reining his horse within thirty yards of the British, ordered his men to advance. The volleys of musketry left him unscathed, the men stood firm, the other divisions came rapidly into action, and the enemy gave way in all directions. The two other British regiments were driven through the town and routed. Had there been cavalry they would have been entirely cut off. As it was, they were completely broken, and in this short but bloody action they lost five hundred men in killed, wounded, and prisoners. It was too late to strike the magazines at Brunswick, as Washington had intended, and so he withdrew once more with his army to the high lands to rest and recruit.

His work was done, however. The country,

which had been supine, and even hostile, rose now, and the British were attacked, surprised, and cut off in all directions, until at last they were shut up in the immediate vicinity of New York. The tide had been turned, and Washington had won the precious breathing-time which was all he required.

Frederick the Great is reported to have said that this was the most brilliant campaign of the century. It certainly showed all the characteristics of the highest strategy and most consummate generalship. With a force numerically insignificant as compared with that opposed to him, Washington won two decisive victories, striking the enemy suddenly with superior numbers at each point of attack. The Trenton campaign has all the quality of some of the last battles fought by Napoleon in France before his retirement to Elba. Moreover, these battles show not only generalship of the first order, but great statesmanship. They display that prescient knowledge which recognizes the supreme moment when all must be risked to save the state. By Trenton and Princeton Washington inflicted deadly blows upon the enemy, but he did far more by reviving the patriotic spirit of the country fainting under the bitter experience of defeat, and by sending fresh life and hope and courage throughout the whole people.

It was the decisive moment of the war. Sooner or later the American colonies were sure to part from the mother-country, either peaceably or vio-

lently. But there was nothing inevitable in the Revolution of 1776, nor was its end at all certain. It was in the last extremities when the British overran New Jersey, and if it had not been for Washington that particular revolution would have most surely failed. Its fate lay in the hands of the general and his army; and to the strong brain growing ever keener and quicker as the pressure became more intense, to the iron will gathering a more relentless force as defeat thickened, to the high, unbending character, and to the passionate and fighting temper of Washington, we owe the brilliant campaign which in the darkest hour turned the tide and saved the cause of the Revolution.

CHAPTER VII

"MALICE DOMESTIC, AND FOREIGN LEVY"

After the "two lucky strokes at Trenton and Princeton," as he himself called them, Washington took up a strong position at Morristown and waited. His plan was to hold the enemy in check, and to delay all operations until spring. It is easy enough now to state his purpose, and it looks very simple, but it was a grim task to carry it out through the bleak winter days of 1777. The Jerseys farmers, spurred by the sufferings inflicted upon them by the British troops, had turned out at last in deference to Washington's appeals, after the victories of Trenton and Princeton, had harassed and cut off outlying parties, and had thus straitened the movements of the enemy. But the main army of the colonies, on which all depended, was in a pitiable state. It shifted its character almost from day to day. The curse of short enlistments, so denounced by Washington, made itself felt now with frightful effect. With the new year most of the continental troops departed, while others to replace them came in very slowly, and recruiting dragged most wearisomely. Washington was thus obliged, with temporary rein-

forcements of raw militia, to keep up appearances; and no commander ever struggled with a more trying task. At times it looked as if the whole army would actually disappear, and more than once Washington expected that the week's or the month's end would find him with not more than five hundred men. At the beginning of March he had about four thousand men, a few weeks later only three thousand raw troops, ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-shod, ill-armed, and almost unpaid. Over against him was Howe, with eleven thousand men in the field, and still more in the city of New York, well disciplined and equipped, well-armed, well-fed, and furnished with every needful supply. The contrast is absolutely grotesque, and yet the force of one man's genius and will was such that this excellent British army was hemmed in and kept in harmless quiet by their ragged opponents.

Washington's plan, from the first, was to keep the field at all hazards, and literally at all hazards did he do so. Right and left his letters went, day after day, calling with pathetic but dignified earnestness for men and supplies. In one of these epistles, to Governor Cooke of Rhode Island, written in January, to remonstrate against raising troops for the State only, he set forth his intentions in a few words. "You must be sensible," he said, "that the season is fast approaching when a new campaign will open; nay, the former is not yet closed; nor do I intend it shall be, unless the enemy quits the Jerseys." To keep fighting all

the time, and never let the fire of active resistance flicker or die out, was Washington's theory of the way to maintain his own side and beat the enemy. If he could not fight big battles, he would fight small ones; if he could not fight little battles, he would raid and skirmish and surprise; but fighting of some sort he would have, while the enemy attempted to spread over a State and hold possession of it. We can see the obstacles now, but we can only wonder how they were sufficiently overcome to allow anything to be done.

Moreover, besides the purely physical difficulties in the lack of men, money, and supplies, there were others of a political and personal kind, which were even more wearing and trying, but which, nevertheless, had to be dealt with also, in some fashion. In order to sustain the courage of the people Washington was obliged to give out, and to allow it to be supposed, that he had more men than was really the case, and so Congress and various wise and well-meaning persons grumbled because he did not do more and fight more battles. He never deceived Congress, but they either could not or would not understand the actual situation. In March he wrote to Robert Morris: "Nor is it in my power to make Congress fully sensible of the real situation of our affairs, and that it is with difficulty, if I may use the expression, that I can by every means in my power keep the life and soul of this army together. In a word, when they are at a distance, they think

it is but to say, *Presto, begone*, and everything is done. They seem not to have any conception of the difficulty and perplexity attending those who are to execute." It was so easy to see what they would like to have done, and so simple to pass a resolve to that effect, that Congress never could appreciate the reality of the difficulty and the danger until the hand of the enemy was almost at their throats. They were not even content with delay and neglect, but interfered actively at times, as in the matter of the exchange of prisoners, where they made unending trouble for Washington, and showed themselves unable to learn or to keep their hands off after any amount of instruction.

In January Washington issued a proclamation requiring those inhabitants who had subscribed to Howe's declaration to come in within thirty days and take the oath of allegiance to the United States. If they failed to do so they were to be treated as enemies. The measure was an eminently proper one, and the proclamation was couched in the most moderate language. It was impossible to permit a large class of persons to exist on the theory that they were peaceful American citizens and also subjects of King George. The results of such conduct were in every way perilous and intolerable, and Washington was determined that he would divide the sheep from the goats, and know whom he was defending and whom attacking. Yet for this wise and necessary

action he was called in question in Congress and accused of violating civil rights and the resolves of Congress itself. Nothing was actually done about it, but such an incident shows from a single point the infinite tact and resolution required in waging war under a government whose members were unable to comprehend what was meant, and who could not see that until they had beaten England it was hardly worth while to worry about civil rights, which in case of defeat would speedily cease to exist altogether.

Another fertile source of trouble arose from questions of rank. Members of Congress, in making promotions and appointments, were more apt to consider local claims than military merit, and they also allowed their own personal prejudices to affect their action in this respect far too much. Thence arose endless heart-burnings and jealousies, followed by resignations and the loss of valuable officers. Congress, having made the appointments, would go cheerfully about its business, while the swarm of grievances thus let loose would come buzzing about the devoted head of the commander-in-chief. He could not adjourn, but was compelled to quiet rivalries, allay irritated feelings, and ride the storm as best he might. It was all done, however, in one way or another: by personal appeals, and by letters full of dignity, patriotism, and patience, which are very impressive and full of meaning for students of character, even in this day and generation.

Then again, not content with snarling up our native appointments, Congress complicated matters still more dangerously by its treatment of foreigners. The members of Congress were colonists, and the fact that they had shaken off the yoke of the mother country did not in the least alter their colonial and perfectly natural habit of regarding with enormous respect Englishmen and Frenchmen, and indeed anybody who had had the good fortune to be born in Europe. The result was that they distributed commissions and gave inordinate rank to the many volunteers who came over the ocean, actuated by various motives, but all filled with a profound sense of their own merits. It is only fair to Congress to say that the American agents abroad were even more to blame in this respect. Silas Deane especially scattered promises of commissions with a lavish hand, and Congress refused to fulfill many of the promises thus made in its name. Nevertheless, Congress was far too lax, and followed too closely the example of its agents. Some of these foreigners were disinterested men and excellent soldiers, who proved of great value to the American cause. Many others were mere military adventurers, capable of being turned to good account, perhaps, but by no means entitled to what they claimed and in most instances received.

The ill-considered action of Congress and of our agents abroad in this respect was a source of constantly recurring troubles of a very serious

nature. Native officers, who had borne the burden and heat of the day, justly resented being superseded by some stranger, unable to speak the language, who had landed in the States but a few days before. As a result, resignations were threatened which, if carried out, would affect the character of the army very deeply. Then again, the foreigners themselves, inflated by the eagerness of our agents and by their reception at the hands of Congress, would find on joining the army that they could get no commands, chiefly because there were none to give. They would then become dissatisfied with their rank and employment, and bitter complaints and recriminations would ensue. All these difficulties, of course, fell most heavily upon the commander-in-chief, who was heartily disgusted with the whole business. Washington believed from the beginning, and said over and over again in various and ever stronger terms, that this was an American war and must be fought by Americans. In no other way, and by no other persons, did he consider that it could be carried to any success worth having. He saw of course the importance of a French alliance, and deeply desired it, for it was a leading element in the solution of the political and military situation; but alliance with a foreign power was one thing, and sporadic military volunteers were another. Washington had no narrow prejudices against foreigners, for he was a man of broad and liberal mind, and no one was more universally beloved

and respected by the foreign officers than he; but he was intensely American in his feelings, and he would not admit for an instant that the American war for independence could be righteously fought or honestly won by others than Americans. He was well aware that foreign volunteers had a value and use of which he largely and gratefully availed himself; but he was exasperated and alarmed by the indiscriminate and lavish way in which Congress and our agents abroad gave rank and office to them. "Hungry adventurers," he called them in one letter, when driven beyond endurance by the endless annoyances thus forced upon him; and so he pushed their pretensions aside, and managed, on the whole, to keep them in their proper place. The operation was delicate, difficult, and unpleasant, for it seemed to savor of ingratitude. But Washington was never shaken for an instant in his policy, and while he checked the danger, he showed in many instances, like Lafayette and Steuben, that he could appreciate and use all that was really valuable in the foreign contingent.

The service rendered by Washington in this matter has never been justly understood or appreciated. If he had not taken this position, and held it with an absolute firmness which bordered on harshness, we should have found ourselves in a short time with an army of American soldiers officered by foreigners, many of them mere mercenaries, "hungry adventurers," from France, Poland or Hungary, from Germany, Ireland or

England. The result of such a combination would have been disorganization and defeat. That members of Congress and some of our representatives in Europe did not see the danger, and that they were impressed by the foreign officers who came among them, was perfectly natural. Men are the creatures of the time in which they live, and take their color from the conditions which surround them, as the chameleon does from the grass or leaves in which it hides. The rulers and lawmakers of 1776 could not cast off their provincial awe of the natives of England and Europe as they cast off their political allegiance to the British king. The only wonder is that there should have been even one man so great in mind and character that he could rise at a single bound from the level of a provincial planter to the heights of a great national leader. He proved himself such in all ways, but in none more surely than in his ability to consider all men simply as men, and, with a judgment that nothing could confuse, to ward off from his cause and country the dangers inherent in colonial habits of thought and action, so menacing to a people struggling for independence. We can see this strong, high spirit of nationality running through Washington's whole career, but it never did better service than when it stood between the American army and undue favor to foreign volunteers.

Among other disagreeable and necessary truths, Washington had told Congress that Philadelphia

was in danger, that Howe probably meant to occupy it, and that it would be nearly impossible to prevent his doing so. This warning being given and unheeded, he continued to watch his antagonist, doing so with increased vigilance, as signs of activity began to appear in New York. Toward the end of May he broke up his cantonments, having now about seven thousand men, and took a strong position within ten miles of Brunswick. Here he waited, keeping an anxious eye on the Hudson in case he should be mistaken in his expectations, and should find that the enemy really intended to go north to meet Burgoyne instead of south to capture Philadelphia.

Washington's doubts were soon to be resolved and his expectations fulfilled. May 31, a fleet of a hundred sail left New York, and couriers were at once sent southward to warn the States of the possibility of a speedy invasion. About the same time transports arrived with more German mercenaries, and Howe, thus reinforced, entered the Jerseys. Washington determined to decline battle, and if the enemy pushed on and crossed the Delaware, to hang heavily on their rear, while the militia from the south were drawn up to Philadelphia. He adopted this course because he felt confident that Howe would never cross the Delaware and leave the main army of the Americans behind him. His theory proved correct. The British advanced and retreated, burned houses and villages and made feints, but all in vain.

Washington baffled them at every point, and finally Sir William evacuated the Jerseys entirely and withdrew to New York and Staten Island, where active preparations for some expedition were at once begun. Again came anxious watching, with the old fear that Howe meant to go northward and join the now advancing Burgoyne. The fear was groundless. On July 23 the British fleet set sail from New York, carrying between fifteen and eighteen thousand men. Not deceived by the efforts to make him think that they aimed at Boston, but still fearing that the sailing might be only a ruse and the Hudson the real object after all, Washington moved cautiously to the Delaware, holding himself ready to strike in either direction. On the 31st he heard that the enemy were at the Capes. This seemed decisive; so he sent in all directions for reinforcements, moved the main army rapidly to Germantown, and prepared to defend Philadelphia. The next news was that the fleet had put to sea again, and again messengers went north to warn Putnam to prepare for the defense of the Hudson. Washington himself was about to re-cross the Delaware, when tidings arrived that the fleet had once more appeared at the Capes, and after a few more days of doubt the ships came up the Chesapeake and anchored.

Washington thought the "route a strange one," but he knew now that he was right in his belief that Howe aimed at Philadelphia. He therefore

gathered his forces and marched south to meet the enemy, passing through the city in order to impress the disaffected and the timid with the show of force. It was a motley array that followed him. There was nothing uniform about the troops except their burnished arms and the sprigs of evergreen in their hats. Nevertheless Lafayette, who had just come among them, thought that they looked like good soldiers, and the Tories woke up sharply to the fact that there was a large body of men known as the American army, and that they had a certain obvious fighting capacity visible in their appearance. Neither friends nor enemies knew, however, as they stood on the Philadelphia sidewalks and watched the troops go past, that the mere fact of that army's existence was the greatest victory of skill and endurance which the war could show, and that the question of success lay in its continuance.

Leaving Philadelphia, Washington pushed on to the junction of the Brandywine and Christiana Creek, and posted his men along the heights. August 25, Howe landed at the Head of Elk, and Washington threw out light parties to drive in cattle, carry off supplies, and annoy the enemy. This was done, on the whole, satisfactorily, and after some successful skirmishing on the part of the Americans, the two armies on the 5th of September found themselves within eight or ten miles of each other. Washington now determined to risk a battle in the field, despite his inferiority in

every way. He accordingly issued a stirring proclamation to the soldiers, and then fell back behind the Brandywine, to a strong position, and prepared to contest the passage of the river.

Early on September 11, the British advanced to Chad's Ford, where Washington was posted with the main body, and after some skirmishing began to cannonade at long range. Meantime Cornwallis, with the main body, made a long détour of seventeen miles, and came upon the right flank and rear of the Americans. Sullivan, who was on the right, had failed to guard the fords above, and through lack of information was practically surprised. Washington, on rumors that the enemy were marching toward his right, with the instinct of a great soldier was about to cross the river in his front and crush the enemy there, but he also was misled and kept back by false reports. When the truth was known, it was too late. The right wing had been beaten and flung back, the enemy were nearly in the rear, and were now advancing in earnest in front. All that man could do was done. Troops were pushed forward and a gallant stand was made at various points; but the critical moment had come and gone, and there was nothing for it but a hasty retreat, which came near degenerating into a rout.

The causes of this complete defeat, for such it was, are easily seen. Washington had planned his battle and chosen his position well. If he had not been deceived by the first reports, he even

then would have fallen upon and overwhelmed the British centre before they could have reached his right wing. But the Americans, to begin with, were outnumbered. They had only eleven thousand effective men, while the British brought fifteen of their eighteen thousand into action. Then the Americans suffered, as they constantly did, from misinformation, and from an absence of system in learning the enemy's movements. Washington's attack was fatally checked in this way, and Sullivan was surprised from the same causes, as well as from his own culpable ignorance of the country beyond him, which was the reason of his failure to guard the upper fords. The Americans lost, also, by the unsteadiness of new troops when the unexpected happens, and when the panic-bearing notion that they are surprised and likely to be surrounded comes upon them with a sudden shock.

This defeat was complete and severe, and it was followed in a few days by that of Wayne, who narrowly escaped utter ruin. Yet through all this disaster we can see the advance which had been made since the equally unfortunate and very similar battle on Long Island. Then, the troops seemed to lose heart and courage, the army was held together with difficulty, and could do nothing but retreat. Now, in the few days which Howe, as usual, gave his opponent with such fatal effect to himself, Washington rallied his army, and finding them in excellent spirits marched down the

Lancaster road to fight again. On the eve of battle a heavy storm came on, which so injured the arms and munitions that with bitter disappointment he was obliged to withdraw; but nevertheless it is plain how much this forward movement meant. At the moment, however, it looked badly enough, especially after the defeat of Wayne, for Howe pressed forward, took possession of Philadelphia, and encamped the main body of his army at Germantown.

Meantime Washington, who had not in the least given up his idea of fighting again, recruited his army, and having a little more than eight thousand men, determined to try another stroke at the British, while they were weakened by detachments. On the night of October 3 he started, and reached Germantown at daybreak on the 4th. At first the Americans swept everything before them, and flung the British back in rout and confusion. Then matters began to go wrong, as is always likely to happen when, as in this case, widely separated and yet accurately concerted action is essential to success. Some of the British threw themselves into a stone house, and instead of leaving them there under guard, the whole army stopped to besiege, and a precious half hour was lost. Then Greene and Stephen were late in coming up, having made a circuit, and although when they arrived all seemed to go well, the Americans were seized with an inexplicable panic, and fell back, as Wayne truly said, in the very

moment of victory. One of those unlucky accidents, utterly unavoidable, but always dangerous to extensive combinations, had a principal effect on the result. The morning was very misty, and the fog, soon thickened by the smoke, caused confusion, random firing, and, worst of all, that uncertainty of feeling and action which something or nothing converted into a panic. Nevertheless, the Americans rallied quickly this time, and a good retreat was made, under the lead of Greene, until safety was reached. The action, while it lasted, had been very sharp, and the losses on both sides were severe, the Americans suffering most.

Washington, as usual when matters went ill, exposed himself recklessly, to the great alarm of his generals, but all in vain. He was deeply disappointed, and expressed himself so at first, for he saw that the men had unaccountably given way when they were on the edge of victory. The underlying cause was of course, as at Long Island and Brandywine, the unsteadiness of raw troops, and Washington felt rightly, after the first sting had passed, that he had really achieved a great deal. Congress applauded the attempt, and when the smoke of the battle had cleared away, men generally perceived that its having been fought at all was in reality the important fact. It made also a profound impression upon the French cabinet. Eagerly watching the course of events, they saw the significance of the fact that an army raised within a year could fight a battle in the

open field, endure a severe defeat, and then take the offensive and make a bold and well-planned attack, which narrowly missed being overwhelmingly successful. To the observant and trained eyes of Europe, the defeat at Germantown made it evident that there was fighting material among these untrained colonists, capable of becoming formidable; and that there was besides a powerful will and directing mind, capable on its part of bringing this same material into the required shape and condition. To dispassionate onlookers, England's grasp on her colonies appeared to be slipping away very rapidly. Washington himself saw the meaning of it all plainly enough, for it was but the development of his theory of carrying on the war.

There is no indication, however, that England detected, in all that had gone on since her army landed at the Head of Elk, anything more than a couple of natural defeats for the rebels. General Howe was sufficiently impressed to draw in his troops, and keep very closely shut up in Philadelphia, but his country was not moved at all. The fact that it had taken forty-seven days to get their army from the Elk River to Philadelphia, and that in that time they had fought two successful battles and yet had left the American army still active and menacing, had no effect upon the British mind. The English were thoroughly satisfied that the colonists were cowards and were sure to be defeated, no matter what the actual facts might

be. They regarded Washington as an upstart militia colonel, and they utterly failed to comprehend that they had to do with a great soldier, who was able to organize and lead an army, overcome incredible difficulties, beat and outgeneral them, bear defeat, and then fight again. They were unable to realize that the mere fact that such a man could be produced and such an army maintained meant the inevitable loss of colonies three thousand miles away. Men there were in England, undoubtedly, like Burke and Fox, who felt and understood the significance of these things, but the mass of the people, as well as the aristocracy, the king, and the cabinet, would have none of them. Rude contempt for other people is a warming and satisfying feeling, no doubt, and the English have had unquestionably great satisfaction from its free indulgence. No one should grudge it to them, least of all Americans. It is a comfort for which they have paid, so far as this country is concerned, by the loss of their North American colonies, and by a few other settlements with the United States at other and later times.

But although Washington and his army failed to impress England, events had happened in the north, during this same summer, which were so sharp-pointed that they not only impressed the English people keenly and unpleasantly, but they actually penetrated the dull comprehension of George III. and his cabinet. "Why," asked an English lady of an American naval officer, in the

year of grace 1887 — "why is your ship named the Saratoga?" "Because," was the reply, "at Saratoga an English general and an English army of more than five thousand men surrendered to an American army and laid down their arms." Although apparently neglected now in the general scheme of British education, Saratoga was a memorable event in the summer of 1777, and the part taken by Washington in bringing about the great result has never, it would seem, been properly set forth. There is no need to trace here the history of that campaign, but it is necessary to show how much was done by the commander-in-chief, five hundred miles away, to win the final victory.

In the winter of 1776-77 reports came that a general and an army were to be sent to Canada to invade the colonies from the north by way of Lake Champlain. The news does not seem to have made a very deep impression generally, nor to have been regarded as anything beyond the ordinary course of military events. But there was one man, fortunately, who in an instant perceived the full significance of this movement. Washington saw that the English had at last found an idea, or, at least, a general possessed of one. So long as the British confined themselves to fighting one or two battles, and then, taking possession of a single town, were content to sit down and pass their winter in good quarters, leaving the colonists in undisturbed control of all the rest of the country, there was nothing to be

feared. The result of such campaigning as this could not be doubtful for a moment to any clear-sighted man. But when a plan was on foot, which, if successful, meant the control of the lakes and the Hudson, and of a line of communication from the north to the great colonial seaport, the case was very different. Such a campaign as this would cause the complete severance of New England, the chief source for men and supplies, from the rest of the colonies. It promised the mastery, not of a town, but of half a dozen States, and this to the American cause probably would be ruin.

So strongly and clearly did Washington feel all this that his counter-plan was at once ready, and before people had fairly grasped the idea that there was to be a northern invasion, he was sending, early in March, urgent letters to New England to rouse up the militia and have them in readiness to march at a moment's notice. To Schuyler, in command of the northern department, he began now to write constantly, and to unfold the methods which must be pursued in order to compass the defeat of the invaders. His object was to delay the army of Burgoyne by every possible device, while steadily avoiding a pitched battle. Then the militia and hardy farmers of New England and New York were to be rallied, and were to fall upon the flank and rear of the British, harass them constantly, cut off their outlying parties, and finally hem them in and

destroy them. If the army and people of the North could only be left undisturbed, it is evident from his letters that Washington felt no doubt as to the result in that quarter.

But the North included only half the conditions essential to success. The grave danger feared by Washington was that Howe would understand the situation, and seeing his opportunity, would throw everything else aside, and marching northward with twenty thousand men, would make himself master of the Hudson, effect a junction with Burgoyne at Albany, and so cut the colonies in twain. From all he could learn, and from his knowledge of his opponents' character, Washington felt satisfied that Howe intended to capture Philadelphia, advancing, probably, through the Jerseys. Yet, despite his well-reasoned judgment on this point, it seemed so incredible that any soldier could fail to see that decisive victory lay in the north, and in a junction with Burgoyne, that Washington could not really and fully believe in such fatuity until he knew that Howe was actually landing at the Head of Elk. This is the reason for the anxiety displayed in the correspondence of that summer, for the changing and shifting movements, and for the obvious hesitation of opinion, so unusual with Washington at any time. Be it remembered, moreover, that it was an awful doubt which went to bed and got up and walked with him through all those long nights and days. If Howe, the dull and lethargic, should awake from his dream of

conquering America by taking now and again an isolated town, and should break for the north with twenty thousand men, the fortunes of the young republic would come to their severest test.

In that event, Washington knew well enough what he meant to do. He would march his main army to the Hudson, unite with the strong body of troops which he kept there constantly, contest every inch of the country and the river with Howe, and keep him at all hazards from getting to Albany. But he also knew well that if this were done the odds would be fearfully against him, for Howe would then not only outnumber him very greatly, but there would be ample time for the British to act, and but a short distance to be covered. We can imagine, therefore, his profound sense of relief when he found that Howe and his army were really south of Philadelphia, after a waste of many precious weeks. He could now devote himself single-hearted to the defense of the city, for distance and time were at last on his side, and all that remained was to fight Howe so hard and steadily that neither in victory nor defeat would he remember Burgoyne. Pitt said that he would conquer Canada on the plains of Germany, and Burgoyne was compelled to surrender in large measure by the campaign of Washington in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

If we study carefully Washington's correspondence during that eventful summer, grouping together that relating to the northern campaign, and

comparing it with that which dealt with the affairs of his own army, all that has just been said comes out with entire clearness, and it is astonishing to see how exactly events justified his foresight. If he could only hold Howe in the south, he was quite willing to trust Burgoyne to the rising of the people and to the northern wilderness. Every effort he made was in this direction, beginning, as has been said, by his appeals to the New England governors in March. Schuyler, on his part, was thoroughly imbued with Washington's other leading idea, that the one way to victory was by retarding the enemy. At the outset everything went utterly and disastrously wrong. Washington counted on an obstinate struggle, and a long delay at Ticonderoga, for he had not been on the ground, and could not imagine that our officers would fortify everything but the one commanding point.

The loss of the forts appalled the country and disappointed Washington, but did not shake his nerve for an instant. He wrote to Schuyler: "This stroke is severe indeed, and has distressed us much. But notwithstanding things at present have a dark and gloomy aspect, I hope a spirited opposition will check the progress of General Burgoyne's army, and that the confidence derived from his success will hurry him into measures that will, in their consequences, be favorable to us. We should never despair; our situation has before been unpromising, and has changed for the better;

so I trust it will again. If new difficulties arise we must only put forth new exertions, and proportion our efforts to the exigency of the times." Even after this seemingly crushing defeat he still felt sure of Burgoyne, so long as he was unsupported. Suiting the action to the word, he again bent every nerve to rouse New England and get out her militia. When he was satisfied that Howe was landing below Philadelphia, the first thing he did was to send forth the same cry in the same quarter, to bring out more men against Burgoyne. He showed, too, the utmost generosity toward the northern army, sending thither all the troops he could possibly spare, and even parting with his favorite corps of Morgan's riflemen. Despite his liberality, the commanders in the north were unreasonable in their demands, and when they asked too much, Washington flatly declined to send more men, for he would not weaken himself unduly, and he knew what they did not see, that the fate of the northern invasion turned largely on his own ability to cope with Howe.

The blame for the loss of the forts fell of course upon Schuyler, who was none too popular in Congress, and who with St. Clair was accordingly made a scape-goat. Congress voted that Washington should appoint a new commander, and the New England delegates visited him to urge the selection of Gates. This task Washington refused to perform, alleging as a reason that the northern department had always been considered

a separate command, and that he had never done more than advise. These reasons do not look very weighty or very strong, and it is not quite clear what the underlying motive was. Washington never shrank from responsibility, and he knew very well that he could pick out the best man more unerringly than Congress. But he also saw that Congress favored Gates, whom he would not have chosen, and he therefore probably felt that it was more important to have some one whom New England believed in and approved than a better soldier who would have been unwelcome to her representatives. It is certain that he would not have acted thus, had he thought that generalship was an important element in the problem; but he relied on a popular uprising, and not on the commander, to defeat Burgoyne. He may have thought, too, that it was a mistake to relieve Schuyler, who was working in the directions which he had pointed out, and who, if not a great soldier, was a brave, high-minded, and sensible man, devoted to his chief and to the country. It was Schuyler indeed who, by his persistent labor in breaking down bridges, tearing up roads, and felling trees, while he gathered men industriously in all directions, did more than any one else at that moment to prepare the way for an ultimate victory.

Whatever his feelings may have been in regard to the command of the northern department, Washington made no change in his own course

after Gates had been appointed. He knew that Gates was at least harmless, and not likely to block the natural course of events. He therefore felt free to press his own policy without cessation, and without apprehension. He took care that Lincoln and Arnold should be there to look after the New England militia, and he wrote to Governor Clinton, in whose energy and courage he had great confidence, to rouse up the men of New York. He suggested the points of attack, and at every moment advised and counseled and watched, holding all the while a firm grip on Howe. Slowly and surely the net, thus painfully set, tightened round Burgoyne. The New Englanders whipped one division at Bennington, and the New Yorkers shattered another at Oriskany and Fort Schuyler. The country people turned out in defense of their invaded homes and poured into the American camp. Burgoyne struggled and advanced, fought and retreated. Gates, stupid, lethargic, and good-natured, did nothing, but there was no need of generalship; and Arnold was there, turbulent and quarrelsome, but full of daring; and Morgan, too, equally ready; and they and others did all the necessary fighting.

Poor Burgoyne, a brave gentleman, if not a great general, had the misfortune to be a clever man in the service of a stupid administration, and he met the fate usually meted out under such circumstances to men of ideas. Howe went off to the conquest of Philadelphia, Clinton made a brief

burning and plundering raid up the river, and the northern invasion, which really had meaning, was left to its fate. It was a hard fate, but there was no escape. Outnumbered, beaten, and caught, Burgoyne surrendered. If there had been a fighting-man at the head of the American army, the British would have surrendered as prisoners of war, and not on conditions. Schuyler, we may be sure, whatever his failings, would never have let them off so easily. But it was sufficient as it was. The wilderness, and the militia of New York and New England swarming to the defense of their homes, had done the work. It all fell out just as Washington had foreseen and planned, and England, despising her enemy and their commander, saw one of her armies surrender, and might have known, if she had had the wit, that the colonies were now lost forever. The Revolution had been saved at Trenton; it was established at Saratoga. In the one case it was the direct, in the other the indirect, work of Washington.

Poor Gates, with his dull brain turning under the impression that this crowning mercy had been his own doing, lost his head, forgot that there was a commander-in-chief, and sending his news to Congress, left Washington to find out from chance rumors, and a tardy letter from Putnam, that Burgoyne had actually surrendered. This gross slight, however, had deeper roots than the mere exultation of victory acting on a heavy and common mind. It represented a hostile feeling which

had been slowly increasing for some time, which had been carefully nurtured by those interested in its growth, and which blossomed rapidly in the heated air of military triumph. From the outset it had been Washington's business to fight the enemy, manage the army, deal with Congress, and consider in all its bearings the political situation at home and abroad; but he was now called upon to meet a trouble outside the line of duty, and to face attacks from within, which, ideally speaking, ought never to have existed, but which, in view of our very fallible humanity, were certain to come sooner or later. Much domestic malice Washington was destined to encounter in the later years of political strife, but this was the only instance in his military career where enmity came to overt action and open speech. The first and the last of its kind, this assault upon him has much interest, for a strong light is thrown upon his character by studying him, thus beset, and by seeing just how he passed through this most trying and disagreeable of ordeals.

The germ of the difficulties was to be found where we should expect it, in the differences between the men of speech and the man of action, between the lawmakers and the soldier. Washington had been obliged to tell Congress a great many plain and unpleasant truths. It was part of his duty, and he did it accordingly. He was always dignified, calm, and courteous, but he had an alarmingly direct way with him, especially

when he was annoyed. He was simple almost to bluntness, but now and then would use a grave irony which must have made listening ears tingle. Congress was patriotic and well-intentioned, and on the whole stood bravely by its general, but it was unversed in war, very impatient, and at times wildly impracticable. Here is a letter which depicts the situation, and the relation between the general and his rulers, with great clearness. March 14, 1777, Washington wrote to the President: "Could I accomplish the important objects so eagerly wished by Congress, — 'confining the enemy within their present quarters, preventing their getting supplies from the country, and totally subduing them before they are reinforced,' — I should be happy indeed. But what prospect or hope can there be of my effecting so desirable a work at this time?"

We can imagine how exasperating such requests and suggestions must have been. It was very much as if Congress had said: "Good General, bring in the Atlantic tides and drown the enemy; or pluck the moon from the sky and give it to us, as a mark of your loyalty." Such requests are not soothing to any man struggling his best with great anxieties, and with a host of petty cares. Washington, nevertheless, kept his temper, and replied only by setting down a few hard facts which answered the demands of Congress in a final manner, and with all the sting of truth. Thus a little irritation had been generated in

Congress against the general, and there were some members who developed a good deal of pronounced hostility. Sam Adams, a born agitator and a trained politician, unequaled almost in our history as an organizer and manager of men, able, narrow, coldly fierce, the man of the town meeting and the caucus, had no possibility of intellectual sympathy with the silent, patient, hard-gripping soldier, hemmed with difficulties, but ever moving straight forward to his object, with occasional wild gusts of reckless fighting passion. John Adams, too, brilliant of speech and pen, ardent, patriotic, and high-minded, was, in his way, out of touch with Washington. Although he moved Washington's appointment, he began almost immediately to find fault with him, an exercise to which he was extremely prone. Inasmuch as he could see how things ought to be done, he could not understand why they were not done in that way at once, for he had a fine forgetfulness of other people's difficulties, as is the case with most of us. The New England representatives generally took their cue from these two, especially James Lovell, who carried his ideas into action, and obtained a little niche in the temple of fame by making himself disagreeably conspicuous in the intrigue against the commander-in-chief, when it finally developed.

There were others, too, outside New England who were discontented, and among them Richard Henry Lee, from the General's own State. He

was evidently critical and somewhat unfriendly at this time, although the reasons for his being so are not now very distinct. Then there was Mr. Clark of New Jersey, an excellent man, who thought the General was invading popular rights; and to him others might be added who vaguely felt that things ought to be better than they were. This party, adverse to Washington, obtained the appointment of Gates to the northern department, under whom the army won a great victory, and they were correspondingly happy. John Adams wrote his wife that one cause of thanksgiving was that the tide had not been turned by the commander-in-chief and southern troops, for the adulation would have been intolerable; and that a man may be wise and virtuous and not a deity.

Here, so far as the leading and influential men were concerned, the matter would have dropped, probably; but there were lesser men like Lovell who were much encouraged by the surrender of Burgoyne, and who thought that they now might supplant Washington with Gates. Before long, too, they found in the army itself some active and not over-scrupulous allies. The most conspicuous figure among the military malcontents was Gates himself, who, although sluggish in all things, still had a keen eye for his own advancement. He showed plainly how much his head had been turned by the victory at Saratoga when he failed to inform Washington of the fact, and when he afterward delayed sending back troops

until he was driven to it by the determined energy of Hamilton, who was sent to bring him to reason. Next in importance to Gates was Thomas Mifflin, an ardent patriot, but a rather light-headed person, who espoused the opposition to Washington for causes now somewhat misty, but among which personal vanity played no inconsiderable part. About these two leaders gathered a certain number of inferior officers of no great moment then or since.

The active and moving spirit in the party, however, was one Conway, an Irish adventurer, who made himself so prominent that the whole affair passed into history bearing his name, and the "Conway cabal" has obtained an enduring notoriety which its hero never acquired by any public services. Conway was one of the foreign officers who had gained the favor of Congress and held the rank of brigadier-general, but this by no means filled the measure of his pretensions, and when De Kalb was made a major-general Conway immediately started forward with claims to the same rank. He received strong support from the factious opposition, and there was so much stir that Washington sharply interfered, for to his general objection to these lavish gifts of excessive rank was added an especial distrust in this particular case. In his calm way he had evidently observed Conway, and with his unerring judgment of men had found him wanting. "I may add," he wrote to Lee, "and I think with truth, that

it will give a fatal blow to the existence of the army. Upon so interesting a subject I must speak plainly. General Conway's merit then as an officer, and his importance in this army, exist more in his own imagination than in reality." This plain talk soon reached Conway, drove him at once into furious opposition, and caused him to impart to the faction a cohesion and vigor which they had before lacked. Circumstances favored them. The victory at Saratoga gave them something tangible to go upon, and the first move was made when Gates failed to inform Washington of the surrender, and then held back the troops sent for so urgently by the commander-in-chief, who had sacrificed so much from his own army to secure that of the north.

At this very moment, indeed, when Washington was calling for troops, he was struggling with the utmost tenacity to hold control of the Delaware. He made every arrangement possible to maintain the forts, and the first assaults upon them were repulsed with great slaughter, the British in the attack on Fort Mercer losing Count Donop, the leader, and four hundred men. Then came a breathing space, and then the attacks were renewed, supported by vessels, and both forts were abandoned after the works had been leveled to the ground by the enemy's fire. Meanwhile Hamilton, sent to the north, had done his work; Gates had been stirred, and Putnam, well-meaning but stubborn, had been sharply brought to his bear-

ings. Reinforcements had come, and Washington meditated an attack on Philadelphia. There was a good deal of clamor for something brilliant and decisive, for both the army and the public were a little dizzy from the effects of Saratoga, and with sublime blindness to different conditions, could not see why the same performance should not be repeated to order everywhere else. To oppose this wish was trying, doubly trying to a man eager to fight, and with his full share of the very human desire to be as successful as his neighbor. It required great nerve to say No; but Washington did not lack that quality, and as general and statesman he reconnoitred the enemy's works, weighed the chances, said No decisively, and took up an almost impregnable position at White Marsh. Thereupon Howe announced that he would drive Washington beyond the mountains, and on December 4 he approached the American lines with this highly proper purpose. There was some skirmishing along the foot of the hills of an unimportant character, and on the third day Washington, in high spirits, thought an attack would be made, and rode among the soldiers directing and encouraging them. Nothing came of it, however, but more skirmishing, and the next day Howe marched back to Philadelphia. He had offered battle in all ways, he had invited action; but again, with the same pressure both from his own spirit and from public opinion, Washington had said No. On his own ground he

was more than ready to fight Howe, but despite the terrible temptation he would fight on no other. Not the least brilliant exploit of Wellington was the retreat to the shrewdly prepared lines of Torres Vedras, and one of the most difficult successes of Washington was his double refusal to fight as the year 1777 drew to a close.

Like most right and wise things, Washington's action looks now, a century later, so plainly sensible that it is hard to imagine how any one could have questioned it; and one cannot, without a great effort, realize the awful strain upon will and temper involved in thus refusing battle. If the proposed attack on Philadelphia had failed, or if our army had come down from the hills and been beaten in the fields below, no American army would have remained. The army of the north, of which men were talking so proudly, had done its work and dispersed. The fate of the Revolution rested where it had been from the beginning, with Washington and his soldiers. Drive them beyond the mountains and there was no other army to fall back upon. On their existence everything hinged, and when Howe got back to Philadelphia, there they were still existent, still coherent, hovering on his flank, cooping him up in his lines, and leaving him master of little more than the ground his men encamped upon, and the streets his sentinels patrolled. When Franklin was told in Paris that Howe had taken Philadelphia, his reply was, "Philadelphia has taken Howe."

But, with the exception of Franklin, contemporary opinion in the month of December, 1777, was very different from that of to-day, and the cabal had been at work ever since the commander-in-chief had stepped between Conway and the exorbitant rank he coveted. Washington, indeed, was perfectly aware of what was going on. He was quiet and dignified, impassive and silent, but he knew when men, whether great or small, were plotting against him, and he watched them with the same keenness as he did Howe and the British.

In the midst of his struggle to hold the Delaware forts, and of his efforts to get back his troops from the north, a story came to him that arrested his attention. Wilkinson, of Gates's staff, had come to Congress with the news of the surrender. He had been fifteen days on the road and three days getting his papers in order, and when it was proposed to give him a sword, Roger Sherman suggested that they had better "give the lad a pair of spurs." This thrust and some delay seem to have nettled Wilkinson, who was swelling with importance, and although he was finally made a brigadier-general, he rode off to the north much ruffled. In later years Wilkinson was secretive enough; but in his hot youth he could not hold his tongue, and on his way back to Gates he talked. What he said was marked and carried to headquarters, and on November 9 Washington wrote to Conway: —

"A letter which I received last night contained the following paragraph, — 'In a letter from General Conway to General Gates he says, "*Heaven has determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it.*" I am, sir, your humble servant,'" etc.

This curt note fell upon Conway with stunning effect. It is said that he tried to apologize, and he certainly resigned. As for Gates, he fell to writing letters filled with expressions of wonder as to who had betrayed him, and writhed most pitiably under the exposure. Washington's replies are models of cold dignity, and the calm indifference with which he treated the whole matter, while holding Gates to the point with relentless grasp, is very interesting. The cabal was seriously shaken by this sudden blow. It must have dawned upon them dimly that they might have mistaken their man, and that the silent soldier was perhaps not so easy to dispose of by an intrigue as they had fancied. Nevertheless, they rallied, and taking advantage of the feeling in Congress created by Burgoyne's surrender, they set to work to get control of military matters. The board of war was enlarged to five, with Gates at its head and Mifflin a member, and, thus constituted, it proceeded to make Conway inspector-general, with the rank of major-general. This, after Conway's conduct, was a direct insult to Washington, and marks the highest point attained by his opponents.

In Congress, too, they became more active, and John Jay said that there was in that body a party bitterly hostile to Washington. We know little of the members of that faction now, for they never took the trouble to refer to the matter in after years, and did everything that silence could do to have it all forgotten. But the party existed none the less, and significant letters have come down to us, one of them written by Lovell, and two anonymous, addressed respectively to Patrick Henry and to Laurens, then president, which show a bitter and vindictive spirit, and breathe but one purpose. The same thought is constantly reiterated, that with a good general the northern army had won a great victory, and that the main army, if commanded in the same way, would do likewise. The plan was simple and coherent. The cabal wished to drive Washington out of power and replace him with Gates. With this purpose they wrote to Henry and Laurens; with this purpose they made Conway inspector-general.

When they turned from intrigue to action, however, they began to fail. One of their pet schemes was the conquest of Canada, and with this object Lafayette was sent to the lakes, only to find that no preparations had been made, because the originators of the idea were ignorant and inefficient. The expedition promptly collapsed and was abandoned, with much instruction in consequence to Congress and people. Under their control the commissariat also went hopelessly to pieces, and

a committee of Congress proceeded to Valley Forge and found that in this direction, too, the new managers had grievously failed. Then the original Conway letter, uncovered so unceremoniously by Washington, kept returning to plague its author. Gates's correspondence went on all through the winter, and with every letter Gates floundered more and more, and Washington's replies grew more and more freezing and severe. Gates undertook to throw the blame on Wilkinson, who became loftily indignant and challenged him. The two made up their quarrel very soon in a ludicrous manner, but Wilkinson in the interval had an interview with Washington, which revealed an amount of duplicity and perfidy on the part of the cabal, so shocking to the former's sensitive nature, that he resigned his secretaryship of the board of war on account, as he frankly said, of the treachery and falsehood of Gates. Such a quarrel of course hurt the cabal, but it was still more weakened by Gates himself, whose only idea seemed to be to supersede Washington by slighting him, refusing troops, and declining to propose his health at dinner, — methods as unusual as they were feeble.

The cabal, in fact, was so weak in ability and character that the moment any responsibility fell upon its members it was certain to break down, but the absolutely fatal obstacle to its schemes was the man it aimed to overthrow. The idea evidently was that Washington could be driven to

resign. They knew that they could not get either Congress or public opinion to support them in removing him, but they believed that a few well-placed slights and insults would make him remove himself. It was just here that they made their mistake. Washington, as they were aware, was sensitive and high-spirited to the last degree, and he had no love for office, but he was not one of those weaklings who leave power and place in a pet because they are criticised and assailed. He was not ambitious in the ordinary personal sense, but he had a passion for success. Whether it was breaking a horse, or reclaiming land, or fighting Indians, or saving a state, whatever he set his hand to, that he carried through to the end. With him there never was any shadow of turning back. When, without any self-seeking, he was placed at the head of the Revolution, he made up his mind that he would carry it through everything to victory, if victory were possible. Death or a prison could stop him, but neither defeat nor neglect, and still less the forces of intrigue and cabal.

When he wrote to his brother announcing Burgoyne's surrender, he had nothing to say of the slight Gates put upon him, but merely added in a postscript, "I most devoutly congratulate my country and every well-wisher to the cause on this signal stroke of Providence." This was his tone to every one, both in private and public. His complaint of not being properly notified he made to Gates alone, and put it in the form of a rebuke.

He knew of the movement against him from the beginning, but apparently the first person he confided in was Conway, when he sent him the brief note of November 9. Even after the cabal was fully developed, he wrote about it only once or twice, when compelled to do so, and there is no evidence that he ever talked about it except, perhaps, to a few most intimate friends. In a letter to Patrick Henry he said that he was obliged to allow a false impression as to his strength to go abroad, and that he suffered in consequence; and he added, with a little touch of feeling, that while the yeomanry of New York and New England poured into the camp of Gates, outnumbering the enemy two to one, he could get no aid of that sort from Pennsylvania, and still marvels were demanded of him.

Thus he went on his way through the winter, silent except when obliged to answer some friend, and always ready to meet his enemies. When Conway complained to Congress of his reception at camp, Washington wrote the president that he was not given to dissimulation, and that he certainly had been cold in his manner. He wrote to Lafayette that slander had been busy, and that he had urged his officers to be cool and dispassionate as to Conway, adding, "I have no doubt that everything happens for the best, that we shall triumph over all our misfortunes, and in the end be happy; when, my dear Marquis, if you will give me your company in Virginia, we will laugh at

our past difficulties and the folly of others." But though he wrote thus lightly to his friends, he followed Gates sternly enough, and kept that gentleman occupied as he drove him from point to point. Among other things he touched upon Conway's character with sharp irony, saying, "It is, however, greatly to be lamented that this adept in military science did not employ his abilities in the progress of the campaign, in pointing out those wise measures which were calculated to give us 'that degree of success we could reasonably expect.'"

Poor Gates did not find these letters pleasant reading, and one more curt note, on February 24, finished the controversy. By that time the cabal was falling to pieces, and in a little while was dispersed. Wilkinson's resignation was accepted, Mifflin was put under Washington's orders, and Gates was sent to his command in the north. Conway resigned one day in a pet, and found his resignation accepted and his power gone with unpleasant suddenness. He then got into a quarrel with General Cadwalader on account of his attacks on the commander-in-chief. The quarrel ended in a duel. Conway was badly wounded, and thinking himself dying, wrote a contrite note of apology to Washington, then recovered, left the country, and disappeared from the ken of history. Thus domestic malice and the "bitter party" in Congress failed and perished. They had dashed themselves in vain

against the strong man who held firmly both soldiers and people. "While the public are satisfied with my endeavors, I mean not to shrink from the cause." So Washington wrote to Gordon as the cabal was coming to an end, and in that spirit he crushed silently and thoroughly the faction that sought to thwart his purpose, and drive him from office by sneers, slights, and intrigues.

These attacks upon him came at the darkest moment of his military career. Defeated at Brandywine and Germantown, he had been forced from the forts after a desperate struggle, had seen Philadelphia and the river fall completely into the hands of the enemy, and, bitterest of all, he had been obliged to hold back from another assault on the British lines, and to content himself with baffling Howe when that gentleman came out and offered battle. Then the enemy withdrew to their comfortable quarters, and he was left to face again the harsh winter and the problem of existence. It was the same ever recurring effort to keep the American army, and thereby the American Revolution, alive. There was nothing in this task to stir the blood and rouse the heart. It was merely a question of grim tenacity of purpose and of the ability to comprehend its overwhelming importance. It was not a work that appealed to or inspirited any one, and to carry it through to a successful issue rested with the commander-in-chief alone.

In the frost and snow he withdrew to Valley

Forge, within easy striking distance of Philadelphia. He had literally nothing to rely upon but his own stern will and strong head. His soldiers, steadily dwindling in numbers, marked their road to Valley Forge by the blood from their naked feet. They were destitute and in rags. When they reached their destination they had no shelter, and it was only by the energy and ingenuity of the General that they were led to build huts, and thus secure a measure of protection against the weather. There were literally no supplies, and the Board of War failed completely to remedy the evil. The army was in such straits that it was obliged to seize by force the commonest necessaries. This was a desperate expedient and shocked public opinion, which Washington, as a statesman, watched and cultivated as an essential element of success in his difficult business. He disliked to take extreme measures, but there was nothing else to be done when his men were starving, when nearly three thousand of them were unfit for duty because "barefoot and otherwise naked," and when a large part of the army were obliged to sit up all night by the fires for warmth's sake, having no blankets with which to cover themselves if they lay down. With nothing to eat, nothing to burn, nothing wherewith to clothe themselves, wasting away from exposure and disease, we can only wonder at the forbearance which stayed the hand of violent seizure so long. Yet, as Washington had foreseen, there was even then an outcry

against him. Nevertheless, his action ultimately did more good than harm in the very matter of public opinion, for it opened men's eyes, and led to some tardy improvements and some increased effort.

Worse even than this criticism was the remonstrance of the legislature of Pennsylvania against the going into winter-quarters. They expected Washington to keep the open field, and even to attack the British, with his starving, ragged army, in all the severity of a northern winter. They had failed him at every point and in every promise, in men, clothing, and supplies. They were not content that he covered their State and kept the Revolution alive among the huts of Valley Forge. They wished the impossible. They asked for the moon, and then cried out because it was not given to them. It was a stupid, unkind thing to do, and Washington answered their complaints in a letter to the president of Congress. After setting forth the shortcomings of the Pennsylvanians in the very plainest of plain English, he said: "But what makes this matter still more extraordinary in my eye is that these very gentlemen should think a winter's campaign, and the covering of these States from the invasion of an enemy, so easy and practicable a business. I can answer those gentlemen, that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room, by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold, bleak hill, and sleep under frost

and snow, without clothes or blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel superabundantly for them, and from my soul I pity those miseries which it is neither in my power to relieve or prevent."

This was not a safe man for the gentlemen of Pennsylvania to cross too far, nor could they swerve him, with all his sense of public opinion, one jot from what he meant to do. In the stern rebuke, and in the deep pathos of these sentences, we catch a glimpse of the silent and self-controlled man breaking out for a moment as he thinks of his faithful and suffering men. Whatever happened, he would hold them together, for in this black time we detect the fear which haunted him, that the people at large might give way. He was determined on independence. He felt a keen hatred against England for her whole conduct toward America, and this hatred was sharpened by the efforts of the English to injure him personally by forged letters and other despicable contrivances. He was resolved that England should never prevail, and his language in regard to her has a fierceness of tone which is full of meaning. He was bent, also, on success, and if under the long strain the people should weaken or waver, he was determined to maintain the army at all hazards.

So, while he struggled against cold and hunger and destitution, while he contended with faction

at home and lukewarmness in the administration of the war, even then, in the midst of these trials, he was devising a new system for the organization and permanence of his forces. Congress meddled with the matter of prisoners and with the promotion of officers, and he argued with and checked them, and still pressed on in his plans. He insisted that officers must have better provision, for they had begun to resign. "You must appeal to their interest as well as to their patriotism," he wrote, "and you must give them half-pay and full pay in proper measure." "You must follow the same policy with the men," he said; "you must have done with short enlistments. In a word, gentlemen, you must give me an army, a lasting, enduring, continental army, for therein lies independence." [1] It all comes out now, through the dust of details and annoyances, through the misery and suffering of that wretched winter, through the shrill cries of ignorance and hostility, — the great, clear, strong policy which meant to substitute an army for militia, and thereby secure victory and independence. It is the burden of all his letters to the governors of States, and to his officers everywhere. "I will hold the army together," he said, "but you on all sides must help me build it up." [1]

Thus with much strenuous labor and many fervent appeals he held his army together in some

[1] These two quotations are not literal, of course, but give the substance of many letters.

way, and slowly improved it. His system began to be put in force, his reiterated lessons were coming home to Congress, and his reforms and suggestions were in some measure adopted. Under the sound and trained guidance of Baron Steuben a drill and discipline were introduced, which soon showed marked results. Greene succeeded Mifflin as quartermaster-general, and brought order out of chaos. The Conway cabal went to pieces, and as spring opened Washington began to see light once more. To have held on through that winter was a great feat, but to have built up and improved the army at such a time was much more wonderful. It shows a greatness of character and a force of will rarer than military genius, and enables us to understand better, perhaps, than almost any of his victories, why it was that the success of the Revolution lay in such large measure in the hands of one man.

After Howe's withdrawal from the Jerseys in the previous year, a contemporary wrote that Washington was left with the remnants of an army "to scuffle for liberty." The winter had passed, and he was prepared to scuffle again. On May 11 Sir Henry Clinton relieved Sir William Howe at Philadelphia, and the latter took his departure in a blaze of mock glory and resplendent millinery, known as the Mischianza, a fit close to a career of failure, which he was too dull to appreciate. The new commander was more active than his predecessor, but no cleverer, and

no better fitted to cope with Washington. It was another characteristic choice on the part of the British ministry, who could never muster enough intellect to understand that the Americans would fight, and that they were led by a really great soldier. The coming of Clinton did not alter existing conditions.

Expecting a movement by the enemy, Washington sent Lafayette forward to watch Philadelphia. Clinton and Howe, eager for a victory before departure, determined to cut him off, and by a rapid movement nearly succeeded in so doing. Timely information, presence of mind, and quickness alone enabled the young Frenchman to escape, narrowly but completely. Meantime, a cause for delay, that curse of the British throughout the war, supervened. A peace commission, consisting of the Earl of Carlisle, William Eden, and Governor Johnstone, arrived. They were excellent men, but they came too late. Their propositions three years before would have been well enough, but as it was they were worse than nothing. Coolly received, they held a fruitless interview with a committee of Congress, tried to bribe and intrigue, found that their own army had been already ordered to evacuate Philadelphia without their knowledge, and finally gave up their task in angry despair, and returned to England to join in the chorus of fault-finding which was beginning to sound very loud in ministerial ears.

Meanwhile, Washington waited and watched,

puzzled by the delay, and hoping only to harass Sir Henry with militia on the march to New York. But as the days slipped by, the Americans grew stronger, while the British had been weakened by wholesale desertions. When he finally started, he had with him probably sixteen to seventeen thousand men, while the Americans had apparently at least thirteen thousand, nearly all continental troops.[1] Under these circumstances, Washington determined to bring on a battle. He was thwarted at the outset by his officers, as was wont to be the case. Lee had returned more whimsical than ever, and at the moment was strongly adverse to an attack, and was full of wise saws about building a bridge of gold for the flying enemy. The ascendancy which, as an English officer, he still retained enabled him to get a certain following, and the councils of war which were held compared unfavorably, as Hamilton put it, with the deliberations of midwives. Washington was harassed of course by all this, but he did not stay his purpose, and

[1] The authorities are hopelessly conflicting as to the numbers on both sides. The British returns on March 26 showed over 19,000 men. They had since that date been weakened by desertions, but to what extent we can only conjecture. The detachments to Florida and the West Indies ordered from England do not appear to have taken place. The estimate of 16,000 to 17,000 seems the most reasonable. Washington returned his rank and file as just over 10,000, which would indicate a total force of 13,000 to 14,000, possibly more. Washington clearly underestimated the enemy, and the best conclusion seems to be that they were nearly matched in numbers, with a slight inferiority on the American side.

as soon as he knew that Clinton actually had marched, he broke camp at Valley Forge and started in pursuit. There were more councils of an old-womanish character, but finally Washington took the matter into his own hands, and ordered forth a strong detachment to attack the British rear-guard. They set out on the 25th, and as Lee, to whom the command belonged, did not care to go, Lafayette was put in charge. As soon as Lafayette had departed, however, Lee changed his mind, and insisted that all the detachments in front, amounting to five thousand men, formed a division so large that it was unjust not to give him the command. Washington, therefore, sent him forward next day with two additional brigades, and then Lee by seniority took command on the 27th of the entire advance.

In the evening of that day, Washington came up, reconnoitred the enemy, and saw that, although their position was a strong one, another day's unmolested march would make it still stronger. He therefore resolved to attack the next morning, and gave Lee then and there explicit orders to that effect. In the early dawn he dispatched similar orders, but Lee apparently did nothing except move feebly forward, saying to Lafayette, "You don't know the British soldiers; we cannot stand against them." He made a weak attempt to cut off a covering party, marched and countermarched, ordered and countermanded, until Lafayette and Wayne, eager to fight, knew not what to do, and sent hot messages to Washington to come to them.

Thus hesitating and confused, Lee permitted Clinton to get his baggage and train to the front, and to mass all his best troops in the rear under Cornwallis, who then advanced against the American lines. Now there were no orders at all, and the troops did not know what to do, or where to go. They stood still, then began to fall back, and then to retreat. A very little more and there would have been a rout. As it was, Washington alone prevented disaster. His early reports from the front from Dickinson's outlying party, and from Lee himself, were all favorable. Then he heard the firing, and putting the main army in motion, he rode rapidly forward. First he encountered a straggler, who talked of defeat. He could not believe it, and the fellow was pushed aside and silenced. Then came another and another, all with songs of death. Finally, officers and regiments began to come. No one knew why they fled, or what had happened. As the ill tidings grew thicker, Washington spurred sharper and rode faster through the deep sand, and under the blazing midsummer sun. At last he met Lee and the main body all in full retreat. He rode straight at Lee, savage with anger, not pleasant to look at, one may guess, and asked fiercely and with a deep oath, tradition says, what it all meant. Lee was no coward, and did not usually lack for words. He was, too, a hardened man of the world, and, in the phrase of that day, impudent to boot. But then and there he stammered

and hesitated. The fierce question was repeated. Lee gathered himself and tried to excuse and palliate what had happened, but although the brief words that followed are variously reported to us across the century, we know that Washington rebuked him in such a way, and with such passion, that all was over between them. Lee had committed the one unpardonable sin in the eyes of his commander. He had failed to fight when the enemy was upon him. He had disobeyed orders and retreated. It was the end of him. He went to the rear, thence to a court-martial, thence to dismissal and to a solitary life with a well-founded suspicion of treason hanging about him. He was an intelligent, quick-witted, unstable man, much overrated because he was an English officer among a colonial people. He was ever treated magnanimously by Washington after the day of battle at Monmouth, but he then disappeared from the latter's life.

When Lee bowed before the storm and stepped aside, Washington was left to deal with the danger and confusion around him. Thus did he tell the story afterwards to his brother: "A retreat, however, was the fact, be the causes what they may; and the disorder arising from it would have proved fatal to the army, had not that bountiful Providence, which has never failed us in the hour of distress, enabled me to form a regiment or two (of those that were retreating) in the face of the enemy, and under their fire; by which means a

stand was made long enough (the place through which the enemy were pressing being narrow) to form the troops, that were advancing, upon an advantageous piece of ground in the rear." We cannot add much to these simple and modest words, for they tell the whole story. Having put Lee aside, Washington rallied the broken troops, brought them into position, turned them back, and held the enemy in check. It was not an easy feat, but it was done, and when Lee's division again fell back in good order the main army was in position, and the action became general. The British were repulsed, and then Washington, taking the offensive, drove them back until he occupied the battlefield of the morning. Night came upon him still advancing. He halted his army, lay down under a tree, his soldiers lying on their arms about him, and planned a fresh attack, to be made at daylight. But when the dawn came it was seen that the British had crept off, and were far on their road. The heat prevented a rapid pursuit, and Clinton got into New York. Between there and Philadelphia he had lost at least two thousand men by desertions in addition to nearly five hundred who fell at Monmouth.

It is worth while to pause a moment and compare this battle with the rout of Long Island, the surprise at the Brandywine, and the fatal unsteadiness at Germantown. Here, too, a check was received at the outset, owing to blundering which no one could have foreseen. The troops, confused

and without orders, began to retreat, but without panic or disorder. The moment Washington appeared they rallied, returned to the field, showed perfect steadiness, and the victory was won. Monmouth has never been one of the famous battles of the Revolution, and yet there is no other which can compare with it as an illustration of Washington's ability as a soldier. It was not so much the way in which it was fought, although that was fine enough, that its importance lies as in the evidence which it gives of the way in which Washington, after a series of defeats, during a winter of terrible suffering and privation, had yet developed his ragged volunteers into a well-disciplined and effective army. The battle was a victory, but the existence and the quality of the army that won it were a far greater triumph.

The dreary winter at Valley Forge had indeed borne fruit. With a slight numerical superiority Washington had fought the British in the open field, and fairly defeated them. "Clinton gained no advantage," said the great Frederic, "except to reach New York with the wreck of his army; America is probably lost for England." Another year had passed, and England had lost an army, and still held what she had before, the city of New York. Washington was in the field with a better army than ever, and an army flushed with a victory which had been achieved after difficulties and trials such as no one now can rightly picture or describe. The American Revolution was advan-

cing, held firm by the master-hand of its leader. Into it, during these days of struggle and of battle, a new element had come, and the next step is to see how Washington dealt with the fresh conditions upon which the great conflict had entered.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ALLIES

On May 4, 1778, Congress ratified the treaties of commerce and alliance with France. On the 6th, Washington, waiting at Valley Forge for the British to start from Philadelphia, caused his army, drawn out on parade, to clelebrate the great event with cheers and with salvos of artillery and musketry. The alliance deserved cheers and celebration, for it marked a long step onward in the Revolution. It showed that America had demonstrated to Europe that she could win independence, and it had been proved to the traditional enemy of England that the time had come when it would be profitable to help the revolted colonies. But the alliance brought troubles as well as blessings in its train. It induced a relaxation in popular energy, and carried with it new and difficult problems for the commander-in-chief. The successful management of allies, and of allied forces, had been one of the severest tests of the statesmanship of William III., and had constituted one of the principal glories of Marlborough. A similar problem now confronted the American general.

Washington was free from the diplomatic and political portion of the business, but the military and popular part fell wholly into his hands, and demanded the exercise of talents entirely different from those of either a general or an administrator. It has been not infrequently written more or less plainly, and it is constantly said, that Washington was great in character, but that in brains he was not far above the commonplace. It is even hinted sometimes that the father of his country was a dull man, a notion which we shall have occasion to examine more fully further on. At this point let the criticism be remembered merely in connection with the fact that to coöperate with allies in military matters demands tact, quick perception, firmness, and patience. In a word, it is a task which calls for the finest and most highly trained intellectual powers, and of which the difficulty is enhanced a thousandfold when the allies are on the one side, an old, aristocratic, punctilious people, and on the other, colonists utterly devoid of tradition, etiquette, or fixed habits, and very much accustomed to go their own way and speak their own minds with careless freedom. With this problem Washington was obliged suddenly to deal, both in ill success and good success, as well as in many attempts which came to nothing. Let us see how he solved it at the very outset, when everything went most perversely wrong.

On July 14 he heard that D'Estaing's fleet was off the coast, and at once, without a trace of ela-

tion or excitement, he began to consider the possibility of intercepting the British fleet expected to arrive shortly from Cork. As soon as D'Estaing was within reach he sent two of his aides on board the flagship, and at once opened a correspondence with his ally. These letters of welcome, and those of suggestion which followed, are models, in their way, of what such letters ought always to be. They were perfectly adapted to satisfy the etiquette and the love of good manners of the French, and yet there was not a trace of anything like servility, or of an effusive gratitude which outran the favors granted. They combined stately courtesy with simple dignity, and are phrased with a sober grace which shows the thoroughly strong man, as capable to turn a sentence, if need be, as to rally retreating soldiers in the face of the enemy.

In this first meeting of the allies nothing happened fortunately. D'Estaing had had a long passage, and was too late to cut off Lord Howe at the Delaware. Then he turned to New York, and was too late there, and found further that he could not get his ships over the bar. Hence more delays, so that he was late again in getting to Newport, where he was to unite with Sullivan in driving the British from Rhode Island, as Washington had planned, in case of failure at New York, while the French were still hovering on the coast. When D'Estaing finally reached Newport, there was still another delay of ten days, and then, just as he and Sullivan were preparing to attack, Lord

Howe, with his squadron reinforced, appeared off the harbor. Promising to return, D'Estaing sailed out to give the enemy battle, and after much manœuvring both fleets were driven off by a severe storm, and D'Estaing came back only to tell Sullivan that he must go to Boston at once to refit. Then came the protest addressed to the Count and signed by all the American officers; then the departure of D'Estaing, and an indiscreet proclamation to the troops by Sullivan, reflecting on the conduct of the allies.

When D'Estaing had actually gone, and the Americans were obliged to retreat, there was much grumbling in all directions, and it looked as if the first result of the alliance was to be a very pretty quarrel. It was a bad and awkward business. Congress had the good sense to suppress the protest of the officers, and Washington, disappointed, but perhaps not wholly surprised, set himself to work to put matters right. It was no easy task to soothe the French, on the one hand, who were naturally aggrieved at the utterances of the American officers and at the popular feeling, and on the other to calm his own people, who were, not without reason, both disappointed and provoked. To Sullivan, fuming with wrath, he wrote: "Should the expedition fail through the abandonment of the French fleet, the officers concerned will be apt to complain loudly. But prudence dictates that we should put the best face upon the matter, and to the world attribute the

removal to Boston to necessity. The reasons are too obvious to need explaining." And again, a few days later: "First impressions, you know, are generally longest remembered, and will serve to fix in a great degree our national character among the French. In our conduct towards them we should remember that they are a people old in war, very strict in military etiquette, and apt to take fire when others scarcely seem warmed. Permit me to recommend, in the most particular manner, the cultivation of harmony and good agreement, and your endeavor to destroy that ill-humor which may have got into officers." To Lafayette he wrote: "Everybody, sir, who reasons, will acknowledge the advantages which we have derived from the French fleet, and the zeal of the commander of it; but in a free and republican government you cannot restrain the voice of the multitude. Every man will speak as he thinks, or, more properly, without thinking, and consequently will judge of effects without attending to the causes. The censures which have been leveled at the French fleet would more than probably have fallen in a much higher degree upon a fleet of our own, if we had had one in the same situation. It is the nature of man to be displeased with everything that disappoints a favorite hope or flattering project; and it is the folly of too many of them to condemn without investigating circumstances." Finally he wrote to D'Estaing, deploring the difference which had arisen,

mentioning his own efforts and wishes to restore harmony, and said: "It is in the trying circumstances to which your Excellency has been exposed that the virtues of a great mind are displayed in their brightest lustre, and that a general's character is better known than in the moment of victory. It was yours by every title that can give it; and the adverse elements that robbed you of your prize can never deprive you of the glory due you. Though your success has not been equal to your expectations, yet you have the satisfaction of reflecting that you have rendered essential services to the common cause." This is not the letter of a dull man. Indeed, there is a nicety about it that partakes of cleverness, a much commoner thing than greatness, but something which all great men by no means possess. Thus by tact and comprehension of human nature, by judicious suppression and equally judicious letters, Washington, through the prudent exercise of all his commanding influence, quieted his own people and soothed his allies. In this way a serious disaster was averted, and an abortive expedition was all that was left to be regretted, instead of an ugly quarrel, which might readily have neutralized the vast advantages flowing from the French alliance.

Having refitted, D'Estaing bore away for the West Indies, and so closed the first chapter in the history of the alliance with France. Nothing more was heard of the allies until the spring was well advanced, when M. Gérard, the minister,

wrote, intimating that D'Estaing was about to return, and asking what we would do. Washington replied at length, professing his willingness to coöperate in any way, and offering, if the French would send ships, to abandon everything, run all risks, and make an attack on New York. Nothing further came of it, and Washington heard that the fleet had gone to the Southern States, which he learned without regret, as he was apprehensive as to the condition of affairs in that region. Again, in the autumn, it was reported that the fleet was once more upon the northern coast. Washington at once sent officers to be on the lookout at the most likely points, and he wrote elaborately to D'Estaing, setting forth with wonderful perspicuity the incidents of the past, the condition of the present, and the probabilities of the future. He was willing to do anything, or plan anything, provided his allies would join with him. The jealousy so habitual in humanity, which is afraid that some one else may get the glory of a common success, was unknown to Washington, and if he could but drive the British from America, and establish American independence, he was perfectly willing that the glory should take care of itself. But all his wisdom in dealing with the allies was, for the moment, vain. While he was planning for a great stroke, and calling out the militia of New England, D'Estaing was making ready to relieve Georgia, and a few days after Washington wrote his second letter, the French

and Americans assaulted the British works at Savannah, and were repulsed with heavy losses. Then D'Estaing sailed away again, and the second effort of France to aid England's revolted colonies came to an end. Their presence had had a good moral effect, and the dread of D'Estaing's return had caused Clinton to withdraw from Newport and concentrate in New York. This was all that was actually accomplished, and there was nothing for it but to await still another trial and a more convenient season.

With all his courtesy and consideration, with all his readiness to fall in with the wishes and schemes of the French, it must not be supposed that Washington ever went an inch too far in this direction. He valued the French alliance, and proposed to use it to great purpose, but he was not in the least dazzled or blinded by it. Even in the earliest glow of excitement and hope produced by D'Estaing's arrival, Washington took occasion to draw once more the distinction between a valuable alliance and volunteer adventurers, and to remonstrate again with Congress about their reckless profusion in dealing with foreign officers. To Gouverneur Morris he wrote on July 24, 1778: "The lavish manner in which rank has hitherto been bestowed on these gentlemen will certainly be productive of one or the other of these two evils: either to make it despicable in the eyes of Europe, or become the means of pouring them in upon us like a torrent and adding to

our present burden. But it is neither the expense nor the trouble of them that I most dread. There is an evil more extensive in its nature, and fatal in its consequences, to be apprehended, and that is the driving of all our own officers out of the service, and throwing not only our army, but our military councils, entirely into the hands of foreigners. . . . Baron Steuben, I now find, is also wanting to quit his inspectorship for a command in the line. This will be productive of much discontent to the brigadiers. In a word, although I think the baron an excellent officer, I do most devoutly wish that we had not a single foreigner among us except the Marquis de Lafayette, who acts upon very different principles from those which govern the rest." A few days later he said, on the same theme, to the president of Congress: "I trust you think me so much a citizen of the world as to believe I am not easily warped or led away by attachments merely local and American; yet I confess I am not entirely without them, nor does it appear to me that they are unwarrantable, if confined within proper limits. Fewer promotions in the foreign line would have been productive of more harmony, and made our warfare more agreeable to all parties." Again, he said of Steuben: "I regret that there should be a necessity that his services should be lost to the army; at the same time I think it my duty explicitly to observe to Congress that his desire of having an actual and permanent command in the line

cannot be complied with without wounding the feelings of a number of officers, whose rank and merits give them every claim to attention; and that the doing of it would be productive of much dissatisfaction and extensive ill consequences."

Washington's resistance to the colonial deference for foreigners has already been pointed out, but this second burst of opposition, coming at this especial time, deserves renewed attention. The splendid fleet and well-equipped troops of our ally were actually at our gates, and everybody was in a paroxysm of perfectly natural gratitude. To the colonial mind, steeped in colonial habits of thought, the foreigner at this particular juncture appeared more than ever to be a splendid and superior being. But he did not in the least confuse or sway the cool judgment that guided the destinies of the Revolution. Let us consider well the pregnant sentences just quoted, and the letters from which they are taken. They deserve it, for they throw a strong light on a side of Washington's mind and character too little appreciated. One hears it said not infrequently, it has been argued even in print with some solemnity, that Washington was, no doubt, a great man and rightly a national hero, but that he was not an American. It will be necessary to recur to this charge again and consider it at some length. It is sufficient at this point to see how it tallies with his conduct in a single matter, which was a very perfect test of the national and American quality of the man.

We can get at the truth by contrasting him with his own contemporaries, the only fair comparison, for he was a man and an American of his own time and not of the present day, which is a point his critics overlook.

Where he differed from the men of his own time was in the fact that he rose to a breadth and height of Americanism and of national feeling which no other man of that day touched at all. Nothing is more intense than the conservatism of mental habits, and although it requires now an effort to realize it, it should not be forgotten that in every habit of thought the inhabitants of the thirteen colonies were wholly colonial. If this is properly appreciated we can understand the mental breadth and vigor which enabled Washington to shake off at once all past habits and become an independent leader of an independent people. He felt to the very core of his being the need of national self-respect and national dignity. To him, as the chief of the armies and the head of the Revolution, all men, no matter what tongue they spake or what country they came from, were to be dealt with on a footing of simple equality, and treated according to their merits. There was to him no glamour in the fact that this man was a Frenchman and that an Englishman. His own personal pride extended to his people, and he bowed to no national superiority anywhere. Hamilton was national throughout, but he was born outside the thirteen colonies, and knew his fellow-citizens only as Americans.

Franklin was national by the force of his own commanding genius. John Adams grew to the same conception, so far as our relations to other nations were concerned. But beyond these three we may look far and closely before we find another among all the really great men of the time who freed himself wholly from the superstition of the colonist about the nations of Europe.

When Washington drew his sword beneath the Cambridge elm he stood forth as the first American, the best type of man that the New World could produce, with no provincial taint upon him, and no shadow of the colonial past clouding his path. It was this great quality that gave the struggle which he led a character it would never have attained without a leader so constituted. Had he been merely a colonial Englishman, had he not risen at once to the conception of an American nation, the world would have looked at us with very different eyes. It was the personal dignity of the man, quite as much as his fighting capacity, which impressed Europe. Kings and ministers, looking on dispassionately, soon realized that here was no ordinary agitator or revolutionist, but a great man on a great stage with great conceptions. England, indeed, talked about a militia colonel, but this chatter disappeared in the smoke of Trenton, and even England came to look upon him as the all-powerful spirit of the Revolution. Dull men and colonial squires do not grasp a great idea and carry it into action on the world's stage in a

few months. To stand forward at the head of raw armies and of a colonial people as a national leader, calm, dignified, and far-seeing, requires not only character, but intellect of the highest and strongest kind. Now that we have come as a people, after more than a century's struggle, to the national feeling which Washington compassed in a moment, it is well to consider that single achievement and to meditate on its meaning, whether in estimating him, or in gauging what he was to the American people when they came into existence.

Let us take another instance of the same quality, shown also in the winter of 1778. Congress had from the beginning a longing to conquer Canada, which was a wholly natural and entirely laudable desire, for conquest is always more interesting than defense. Washington, on the other hand, after the first complete failure, which was so nearly a success in the then undefended and unsuspicious country, gave up pretty thoroughly all ideas of attacking Canada again, and opposed the various plans of Congress in that direction. When he had a life-and-death struggle to get together and subsist enough men to protect their own firesides, he had ample reason to know that invasions of Canada were hopeless. Indeed, not much active opposition from the commander-in-chief was needed to dispose of the Canadian schemes, for facts settled them as fast as they arose. When the cabal got up its Canadian expedition, it consisted of Lafayette, and penetrated no farther than Albany.

So Washington merely kept his eye watchfully on Canada, and argued against expeditions thither, until this winter of 1778, when something quite new in that direction came up.

Lafayette's imagination had been fired by the notion of conquering Canada. His idea was to get succors from France for this especial purpose, and with them and American aid to achieve the conquest. Congress was impressed and pleased by the scheme, and sent a report upon it to Franklin, to communicate to the French court, but Washington, when he heard of the plan, took a very different view. He sent at once a long dispatch to Congress, urging every possible objection to the proposed campaign, on the ground of its utter impracticability, and with this official letter, which was necessarily confined to the military side of the question, went another addressed to President Laurens personally, which contained the deeper reasons of his opposition. He said that there was an objection not touched upon in his public letter, which was absolutely insurmountable. This was the introduction of French troops into Canada to take possession of the capital, in the midst of a people of their own race and religion, and but recently severed from them.

He pointed out the enormous advantages which would accrue to France from the possession of Canada, such as independent posts, control of the Indians, and the Newfoundland trade. "France, . . . possessed of New Orleans on our right,

Canada on our left, and seconded by the numerous tribes of Indians in our rear, . . . would, it is much to be apprehended, have it in her power to give law to these States." He went on to show that France might easily find an excuse for such conduct, in seeking a surety for her advances of money, and that she had but little to fear from the contingency of our being driven to reunite with England. He continued: "Men are very apt to run into extremes. Hatred to England may carry some into an excess of confidence in France, especially when motives of gratitude are thrown into the scale. Men of this description would be unwilling to suppose France capable of acting so ungenerous a part. I am heartily disposed to entertain the most favorable sentiments of our new ally, and to cherish them in others to a reasonable degree. But it is a maxim, founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its own interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it. In our circumstances we ought to be particularly cautious; for we have not yet attained sufficient vigor and maturity to recover from the shock of any false steps into which we may unwarily fall."

We shall have occasion to recall these utterances at a later day, but at this time they serve to show yet again how broadly and clearly Washington judged nations and policies. Uppermost in his mind was the destiny of his own nation, just com-

ing into being, and from that firm point he watched and reasoned. His words had no effect on Congress, but as it turned out, the plan failed through adverse influences in the quarter where Washington least expected them. He believed that this Canadian plan had been put into Lafayette's mind by the cabinet of Louis XVI., and he could not imagine that a policy of such obvious wisdom could be overlooked by French statesmen. In this he was completely mistaken, for France failed to see what seemed so simple to the American general, that the opportunity had come to revive her old American policy and reëstablish her colonies under the most favorable conditions. The ministers of Louis XVI., moreover, did not wish the colonies to conquer Canada, and the plan of Lafayette and the Congress received no aid in Paris and came to nothing. But the fruitless incident exhibits in the strongest light the attitude of Washington as a purely American statesman, and the comprehensiveness of his mind in dealing with large affairs.

The French alliance and the coming of the French fleet were of incalculable advantage to the colonies, but they had one evil effect, as has already been suggested. To a people weary with unequal conflict, it was a debilitating influence, and America needed at that moment more than ever energy and vigor, both in the council and the field. Yet the general outlook was distinctly better and more encouraging. Soon after Washington had defeated

Clinton at Monmouth, and had taken a position whence he could watch and check him, he wrote to his friend General Nelson in Virginia: —

"It is not a little pleasing, nor less wonderful to contemplate, that, after two years' manœuvring and undergoing the strangest vicissitudes that perhaps ever attended any one contest since the creation, both armies are brought back to the very point they set out from, and that the offending party at the beginning is now reduced to the spade and pickaxe for defense. The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations. But it will be time enough for me to turn preacher when my present appointment ceases."

He had reason to congratulate himself on the result of his two years' campaigning, but as the summer wore away and winter came on he found causes for fresh and deep alarm, despite the good outlook in the field. The demoralizing effects of civil war were beginning to show themselves in various directions. The character of Congress, in point of ability, had declined alarmingly, for the ablest men of the first Congress, with few exceptions, had departed. Some had gone to the army, some to the diplomatic service, and many had remained at home, preferring the honors and offices of the States to those of the Confederation. Their successors, patriotic and well-meaning though they

were, lacked the energy and force of those who had started the Revolution, and, as a consequence, Congress had become feeble and ineffective, easily swayed by influential schemers, and unable to cope with the difficulties which surrounded them.

Outside the government the popular tone had deteriorated sadly. The lavish issues of irredeemable paper by the Confederation and the States had brought their finances to the verge of absolute ruin. The continental currency had fallen to something like forty to one in gold, and the decline was hastened by the forged notes put out by the enemy. The fluctuations of this paper soon bred a spirit of gambling, and hence came a class of men, both inside and outside of politics, who sought, more or less corruptly, to make fortunes by army contracts, and by forestalling the markets. These developments filled Washington with anxiety, for in the financial troubles he saw ruin to the army. The unpaid troops bore the injustice done them with wonderful patience, but it was something that could not last, and Washington knew the danger. In vain did he remonstrate. It seemed to be impossible to get anything done, and at last, in the following spring, the outbreak began. Two New Jersey regiments refused to march until the assembly made provision for their pay. Washington took high ground with them, but they stood respectfully firm, and finally had their way. Not long after came another outbreak in the Connecticut line, with similar results.

These object lessons had some result, and by foreign loans and the ability of Robert Morris the country was enabled to stumble along; but it was a frightful and wearing anxiety to the commander-in-chief.

Washington saw at once that the root of the evil lay in the feebleness of Congress, and although he could not deal with the finances, he was able to strive for an improvement in the governing body. Not content with letters, he left the army and went to Philadelphia, in the winter of 1779, and there appealed to Congress in person, setting forth the perils which beset them, and urging action. He wrote also to his friends everywhere, pointing out the deficiencies of Congress, and begging them to send better and stronger men. To Benjamin Harrison he wrote: "It appears to me as clear as ever the sun did in its meridian brightness, that America never stood in more eminent need of the wise, patriotic, and spirited exertions of her sons than at this period; . . . the States separately are too much engaged in their local concerns, and have too many of their ablest men withdrawn from the general council, for the good of the common weal." He took the same high tone in all his letters, and there can be seen through it all the desperate endeavor to make the States and the people understand the dangers which he realized, but which they either could not or would not appreciate.

On the other hand, while his anxiety was sharpened to the highest point by the character of Con-

gress, his sternest wrath was kindled by the gambling and money-making which had become rampant. To Reed he wrote in December, 1778: "It gives me sincere pleasure to find that there is likely to be a coalition of the Whigs in your State, a few only excepted, and that the assembly is so well disposed to second your endeavors in bringing those murderers of our cause, the monopolizers, forestallers, and engrossers, to condign punishment. It is much to be lamented that each State, long ere this, has not hunted them down as pests to society and the greatest enemies we have to the happiness of America. I would to God that some one of the most atrocious in each State was hung in gibbets upon a gallows five times as high as the one prepared by Haman. No punishment, in my opinion, is too great for the man who can build his greatness upon his country's ruin." He would have hanged them too had he had the power, for he was always as good as his word.

It is refreshing to read these righteously angry words, still ringing as sharply as when they were written. They clear away all the myths — the priggish, the cold, the statuesque, the dull myths — as the strong gusts of the northwest wind in autumn sweep off the heavy mists of lingering August. They are the hot words of a warm-blooded man, a good hater, who loathed meanness and treachery, and who would have hanged those who battened upon the country's distress. When he went to Philadelphia, a few weeks later, and saw

the state of things with nearer view, he felt the wretchedness and outrage of such doings more than ever. He wrote to Harrison: "If I were to be called upon to draw a picture of the times and of men, from what I have seen, heard, and in part know, I should in one word say, that idleness, dissipation, and extravagance seem to have laid fast hold of most of them; that speculation, peculation, and an insatiable thirst for riches seem to have got the better of every other consideration, and almost of every order of men; that party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day; whilst the momentous concerns of an empire, a great and accumulating debt, ruined finances, depreciated money, and want of credit, which, in its consequences, is the want of everything, are but secondary considerations, and postponed from day to day, from week to week, as if our affairs wore the most promising aspect."

Other men talked about empire, but he alone grasped the great conception, and felt it in his soul. To see not only immediate success imperiled, but the future paltered with by small, mean, and dishonest men, cut him to the quick. He set himself doggedly to fight it, as he always fought every enemy, using both speech and pen in all quarters. Much, no doubt, he ultimately effected, but he was contending with the usual results of civil war, which are demoralizing always, and especially so among a young people in a new country. At first, therefore, all seemed vain. The selfishness,

"peculation, and speculation" seemed to get worse, and the tone of Congress and the people lower, as he struggled against them. In March, 1779, he wrote to James Warren of Massachusetts: "Nothing, I am convinced, but the depreciation of our currency, aided by stock-jobbing and party dissensions, has fed the hopes of the enemy, and kept the British arms in America to this day. They do not scruple to declare this themselves, and add that we shall be our own conquerors. Can not our common country, America, possess virtue enough to disappoint them? Is the paltry consideration of a little pelf to individuals to be placed in competition with the essential rights and liberties of the present generation, and of millions yet unborn? Shall a few designing men, for their own aggrandizement, and to gratify their own avarice, overset the goodly fabric we have been rearing, at the expense of so much time, blood, and treasure? And shall we at last become the victims of our own lust of gain? Forbid it, Heaven! Forbid it, all and every State in the Union, by enacting and enforcing efficacious laws for checking the growth of these monstrous evils, and restoring matters, in some degree, to the state they were in at the commencement of the war."

"Our cause is noble. It is the cause of mankind, and the danger to it is to be apprehended from ourselves. Shall we slumber and sleep, then, while we should be punishing those miscreants who have brought these troubles upon us, and who

are aiming to continue us in them; while we should be striving to fill our battalions, and devising ways and means to raise the value of the currency, on the credit of which everything depends?" Again we see the prevailing idea of the future, which haunted him continually. Evidently, he had some imagination, and also a power of terse and eloquent expression which we have heard of before, and shall note again.

Still the appeals seemed to sound in deaf ears. He wrote to George Mason: "I have seen, without despondency, even for a moment, the hours which America has styled her gloomy ones; but I have beheld no day since the commencement of hostilities that I have thought her liberties in such imminent danger as at present. . . . Indeed, we are verging so fast to destruction that I am filled with sensations to which I have been a stranger till within these three months." To Gouverneur Morris he said: "If the enemy have it in their power to press us hard this campaign, I know not what may be the consequence." He had faced the enemy, the bleak winters, raw soldiers, and all the difficulties of impecunious government, with a cheerful courage that never failed. But the spectacle of widespread popular demoralization, of selfish scrambles for plunder, and of feeble administration at the centre of government weighed upon him heavily. It was not the general's business to build up Congress and grapple with finance, but Washington addressed himself to the new task

with his usual persistent courage. It was slow and painful work. He seemed to make no progress, and then it was that his spirits sank at the prospect of ruin and defeat, not coming on the field of battle, but from our own vices and our own lack of energy and wisdom. Yet his work told in the end, as it always did. His vast and steadily growing influence made itself felt even through the dense troubles of the uneasy times. Congress turned with energy to Europe for fresh loans. Lafayette worked away to get an army sent over. The two Morrises, stimulated by Washington, flung themselves into the financial difficulties, and feeble but distinct efforts toward a more concentrated and better organized administration of public affairs were made both in the States and the confederation.

But, although Washington's spirits fell, and his anxieties became wellnigh intolerable in this period of reaction which followed the French alliance, he made no public show of it, but carried on his own work with the army and in the field as usual, contending with all the difficulties, new and old, as calmly and efficiently as ever. After Clinton slipped away from Monmouth and sought refuge in New York, Washington took post at convenient points and watched the movements of the enemy. In this way the summer passed. As always, Washington's first object was to guard the Hudson, and while he held this vital point firmly, he waited, ready to strike elsewhere if necessary. It looked

for a time as if the British intended to descend on Boston, seize the town, and destroy the French fleet, which had gone there to refit. Such was the opinion of Gates, then commanding in that department, and as Washington inclined to the same belief, the fear of this event gave him many anxious moments. He even moved his troops so as to be in readiness to march eastward at short notice; but he gradually became convinced that the enemy had no such plan. Much of his thought, now and always, was given to efforts to divine the intentions of the British generals. They had so few settled ideas, and were so tardy and lingering when they had plans, that it is small wonder that their opponents were sorely puzzled in trying to find out what their purposes were, when they really had none. The fact was that Washington saw their military opportunities with the eye of a great soldier, and so much better than they, that he suffered a good deal of needless anxiety in devising methods to meet attacks which they had not the wit to undertake. He had a profound contempt for their policy of holding towns, and believing that they must see the utter futility of it, after several years of trial, he constantly expected from them a well-planned and extensive campaign, which in reality they were incapable of devising.

The main army, therefore, remained quiet, and when the autumn had passed went into winter-quarters in well-posted detachments about New York. In December Clinton made an ineffectual

raid, and then all was peaceful again, and Washington was able to go to Philadelphia and struggle with Congress, leaving his army more comfortable and secure than they had been in any previous winter.

In January he informed Congress as to the next campaign. He showed them the impossibility of undertaking anything on a large scale, and announced his intention of remaining on the defensive. It was a trying policy to a man of his temper, but he could do no better, and he knew, now as always, what others could not yet see, that by simply holding on and keeping his army in the field he was slowly but surely winning independence. He tried to get Congress to do something with the navy, and he planned an expedition, under the command of Sullivan, to overrun the Indian country and check the barbarous raids of the Tories and savages on the frontier; and with this he was fain to be content. In fact, he perceived very clearly the direction in which the war was tending. He kept up his struggle with Congress for a permanent army, and with the old persistency pleaded that something should be done for the officers, and at the same time he tried to keep the States in good humor when they were grumbling about the amount of protection afforded them.

But all this wear and tear of heart and brain and temper, while given chiefly to hold the army together, was not endured with any notion that he and Clinton were eventually to fight it out in the

neighborhood of New York. Washington felt that that part of the conflict was over. He now hoped and believed that the moment would come, when, by uniting his army with the French, he should be able to strike the decisive blow. Until that time came, however, he knew that he could do nothing on a great scale, and he felt that meanwhile the British, abandoning practically the eastern and middle States, would make one last desperate struggle for victory, and would make it in the south. Long before any one else, he appreciated this fact, and saw a peril looming large in that region, where everybody was considering the British invasion as little more than an exaggerated raid. He foresaw, too, that we should suffer more there than we had in the extreme north, because the south was full of Tories and less well organized.

All this, however, did not change his own plans one jot. He believed that the south must work out its own salvation, as New York and New England had done with Burgoyne, and he felt sure that in the end it would be successful. But he would not go south, nor take his army there. The instinct of a great commander for the vital point in a war or a battle, is as keen as that of the tiger is said to be for the jugular vein of its victim. The British might overrun the north or invade the south, but he would stay where he was, with his grip upon New York and the Hudson River. The tide of invasion might ebb and flow in this region or that, but the British were doomed if they could not

divide the eastern colonies from the others. When the appointed hour came, he was ready to abandon everything and strike the final and fatal blow; but until then he waited and stood fast with his army, holding the great river in his grasp. He felt much more anxiety about the south than he had felt about the north, and expected Congress to consult him as to a commander, having made up his mind that Greene was the man to send. But Congress still believed in Gates, who had been making trouble for Washington all winter; and so Gates was sent, and Congress in due time got their lesson, and found once more that Washington understood men better than they did.

In the north the winter was comparatively uneventful. The spring passed, and in June Clinton came out and took possession of Stony Point and Verplanck's Point, and began to fortify them. It looked a little as if Clinton might intend to get control of the Hudson by slow approaches, fortifying, and then advancing until he reached West Point. With this in mind, Washington at once determined to check the British by striking sharply at one of their new posts. Having made up his mind, he sent for Wayne and asked him if he would storm Stony Point. Tradition says that Wayne replied, "I will storm hell, if you will plan it." A true tradition, probably, in keeping with Wayne's character, and pleasant to us to-day as showing with a vivid gleam of rough human speech the utter confidence of the army in their leader, that

confidence which only a great soldier can inspire. So Washington planned, and Wayne stormed, and Stony Point fell. It was a gallant and brilliant feat of arms, one of the most brilliant of the war. Over five hundred prisoners were taken, the guns were carried off, and the works destroyed, leaving the British to begin afresh with a good deal of increased caution and respect. Not long after, Harry Lee stormed Paulus Hook with equal success, and the British were checked and arrested, if they intended any extensive movement. On the frontier, Sullivan, after some delays, did his work effectively, ravaging the Indian towns and reducing them to quiet, thus taking away another annoyance and danger.

In these various ways Clinton's circle of activity was steadily narrowed, but it may be doubted whether he had any coherent plan. The principal occupation of the British was to send out marauding expeditions and cut off outlying parties. Tryon burned and pillaged in Connecticut, Matthews in Virginia, and others on a smaller scale elsewhere in New Jersey and New York. The blundering stupidity of this system of warfare was only equaled by its utter brutality. Houses were burned, peaceful villages went up in smoke, women and children were outraged, and soldiers were bayoneted after they had surrendered. These details of the Revolution are wellnigh forgotten now, but when the ear is wearied with talk about English generosity and love of fair play, it is well to turn

back and study the exploits of Tryon, and it is not amiss in the same connection to recall that English budgets contained a special appropriation for scalping-knives, a delicate attention to the Tories and Indians who were burning and butchering on the frontier.

Such methods of warfare Washington despised intellectually, and hated morally. He saw that every raid only hardened the people against England, and made her cause more hopeless. The misery caused by these raids angered him, but he would not retaliate in kind, and Wayne bayoneted no English soldiers after they laid down their arms at Stony Point. It was enough for Washington to hold fast to the great objects he had in view, to check Clinton and circumscribe his movements. Steadfastly he did this through the summer and winter of 1779, which proved one of the worst that he had yet endured. Supplies did not come, the army dwindled, and the miseries of Valley Forge were renewed. Again was repeated the old and pitiful story of appeals to Congress and the States, and again the undaunted spirit and strenuous exertions of Washington saved the army and the Revolution from the internal ruin which was his worst enemy. When the new year began, he saw that he was again condemned to a defensive campaign, but this made little difference now, for what he had foreseen in the spring of 1779 became certainty in the autumn. The active war was transferred to the south, where the chapter of dis-

asters was beginning, and Clinton had practically given up everything except New York. The war had taken on the new phase expected by Washington. Weak as he was, he began to detach troops, and prepared to deal with the last desperate effort of England to conquer her revolted colonies from the south.

CHAPTER IX

ARNOLD'S TREASON, AND THE WAR IN THE SOUTH

The spring of 1780 was the beginning of a period of inactivity and disappointment, of diligent effort and frustrated plans. During the months which ensued before the march to the south, Washington passed through a stress of harassing anxiety, which was far worse than anything he had to undergo at any other time. Plans were formed, only to fail. Opportunities arose, only to pass by unfulfilled. The network of hostile conditions bound him hand and foot, and it seemed at times as if he could never break the bonds that held him, or prevent or hold back the moral, social, and political dissolution going on about him. With the aid of France, he meant to strike one decisive blow, and end the struggle. Every moment was of importance, and yet the days and weeks and months slipped by, and he could get nothing done. He could neither gain control of the sea, nor gather sufficient forces of his own, although delay now meant ruin. He saw the British overrun the south, and he could not leave the Hudson. He was obliged to sacri-

fice the southern States, and yet he could get neither ships nor men to attack New York. The army was starving and mutinous, and he sought relief in vain. The finances were ruined, Congress was helpless, the States seemed stupefied. Treason of the most desperate kind suddenly reared its head, and threatened the very citadel of the Revolution. These were the days of the war least familiar to posterity. They are unmarked in the main by action or fighting, and on this dreary monotony nothing stands out except the black stain of Arnold's treason. Yet it was the time of all others when Washington had most to bear. It was the time of all others when his dogged persistence and unwavering courage alone seemed to sustain the flickering fortunes of the war.

In April Washington was pondering ruefully on the condition of affairs at the south. He saw that the only hope of saving Charleston was in the defense of the bar; and when that became indefensible, he saw that the town ought to be abandoned to the enemy, and the army withdrawn to the country. His military genius showed itself again and again in his perfectly accurate judgment on distant campaigns. He seemed to apprehend all the conditions at a glance, and although his wisdom made him refuse to issue orders when he was not on the ground, those generals who followed his suggestions, even when a thousand miles away, were successful, and those who disregarded them were not. Lincoln, commanding at Charles-

ton, was a brave and loyal man, but he had neither the foresight nor the courage to withdraw to the country, and then, hovering on the lines of the enemy, to confine them to the town. He yielded to the entreaties of the citizens and remained, only to surrender. Washington had retreated from New York, and after five years of fighting the British still held it, and had gone no further. He had refused to risk an assault to redeem Philadelphia, at the expense of much grumbling and cursing, and had then beaten the enemy when they hastily retreated thence in the following spring. His cardinal doctrine was that the Revolution depended upon the existence of the army, and not on the possession of any particular spot of ground, and his masterly adherence to this theory brought victory, slowly but surely. Lincoln's very natural inability to grasp it, and to withstand popular pressure, cost us for a time the southern States and a great deal of bloody fighting.

In the midst of this anxiety about the south, and when he foresaw the coming disasters, Washington was cheered and encouraged by the arrival of Lafayette, whom he loved, and who brought good tidings of his zealous work for the United States in Paris. An army and a fleet were on their way to America, with a promise of more to follow. This was great news indeed. It is interesting to note how Washington took it, for we see here with unusual clearness the readiness of grasp and quickness of thought which have been noted before, but

which are not commonly attributed to him. It has been the fashion to treat Washington as wise and prudent, but as distinctly slow, and when he was obliged to concentrate public opinion, either military or civil, or when doubt overhung his course, he moved with great deliberation. When he required no concentration of opinion, and had made up his mind, he could strike with a terribly swift decision, as at Trenton or Monmouth. So when a new situation presented itself he seized with wonderful rapidity every phase and possibility opened by changed conditions.

The moment he learned from Lafayette that the French succors were actually on the way, he began to lay out plans in a manner which showed how he had taken in at the first glance every chance and every contingency. He wrote that the decisive moment was at hand, and that the French succors would be fatal if not used successfully now. Congress must improve their methods of administration, and for this purpose must appoint a small committee to coöperate with him. This step he demanded, and it was taken at once. Fresh from his interview with Lafayette, he sent out orders to have inquiries made as to Halifax and its defenses. Possibly a sudden and telling blow might be struck there, and nothing should be overlooked. He also wrote to Lafayette to urge upon the French commander an immediate assault on New York the moment he landed. Yet despite his thought for New York, he even then began to see the oppor-

tunities which were destined to develop into Yorktown. He had longed to go to the south before, and had held back only because he felt that the main army and New York were still the key of the position, and could not be safely abandoned. Now, while planning the capture of New York, he asked in a letter whether the enemy was not more exposed at the southward and therefore a better subject for a combined attack there. Clearness and precision of plan as to the central point, joined to a perfect readiness to change suddenly and strike hard and decisively in a totally different quarter, are sure marks of the great commander. We can find them all through the correspondence, but here in May, 1780, they come out with peculiar vividness. They are qualities arising from a wide foresight, and from a sure and quick perception. They are not the qualities of a slow or heavy mind.

On June 1 came the news of the surrender of Charleston and the loss of the army, which was followed by the return of Clinton to New York. The southern States lay open now to the enemy, and it was a severe trial to Washington to be unable to go to their rescue; but with the same dogged adherence to his ruling idea, he concentrated his attention on the Hudson with renewed vigilance on account of Clinton's return. Adversity and prosperity alike were unable to divert him from the control of the great river and the mastery of the middle States until he saw conclusive victory elsewhere fairly within his grasp. In the same

unswerving way he pushed on the preparations for what he felt to be the coming of the decisive campaign and the supreme moment of the war. To all the governors went urgent letters, calling on the States to fill their lines in the continental army, and to have their militia in readiness.

In the midst of these anxieties and preparations, the French arrived at Newport, bringing a well-equipped army of some five thousand men, and a small fleet. They brought, too, something quite as important, in the way of genuine good-will and full intention to do all in their power for their allies. After a moment's hesitation, born of unlucky memories, the people of Rhode Island gave De Rochambeau a hearty welcome, and Washington sent him the most cordial greeting. With the greeting went the polite but earnest request for immediate action, together with plans for attacking New York; and, at the same time, another urgent call went out to the States for men, money, and supplies. The long-looked-for hour had arrived, a fine French army was in Newport, a French fleet rode in the harbor, and instead of action, immediate and effective, the great event marked only the beginning of a period of delays and disappointment, wearing heart and nerve almost beyond endurance.

First it appeared that the French ships could not get into New York harbor. Then there was sickness in the French army. Then the British menaced Newport, and rapid preparations had to

be made to meet that danger. Then it came out that De Rochambeau was ordered to await the arrival of the second division of the army, with more ships; and after due waiting, it was discovered that the aforesaid second division, with their ships, were securely blockaded by the English fleet at Brest. On our side it was no better; indeed, it was rather worse. There was lack of arms and powder. The drafts were made with difficulty, and the new levies came in slowly. Supplies failed altogether, and on every hand there was nothing but delay, and ever fresh delay, and in the midst of it all Washington, wrestling with sloth and incoherence and inefficiency, trampled down one failure and disappointment only to encounter another, equally important, equally petty, and equally harassing.

On August 20 he wrote to Congress a long and most able letter, which set forth forcibly the evil and perilous condition of affairs. After reading that letter no man could say that there was not need of the utmost exertion, and for the expenditure of the last ounce of energy. In it Washington struck especially at the two delusions with which the people and their representatives were lulling themselves into security, and by which they were led to relax their efforts. One was the belief that England was breaking down; the other, that the arrival of the French was synonymous with the victorious close of the war. Washington demonstrated that England still commanded the sea, and

that as long as she did so there was a great advantage on her side. She was stronger, on the whole, this year than the year before, and her financial resources were still ample. There was no use in looking for victory in the weakness of the enemy, and on the other hand, to rely wholly on France was contemptible as well as foolish. After stating plainly that the army was on the verge of dissolution, he said: "To me it will appear miraculous if our affairs can maintain themselves much longer in their present train. If either the temper or the resources of the country will not admit of an alteration, we may expect soon to be reduced to the humiliating condition of seeing the cause of America, in America, upheld by foreign arms. The generosity of our allies has a claim to all our confidence and all our gratitude, but it is neither for the honor of America, nor for the interest of the common cause, to leave the work entirely to them."

It must have been bitter to Washington above all men, with his high dignity and keen sense of national honor, to write such words as these, or make such an argument to any of his countrymen. But it was a work which the time demanded, and he did it without flinching. Having thus laid bare the weak places, he proceeded to rehearse once more, with a weariness we can easily fancy, the old, old lesson as to organization, a permanent army, and a better system of administration. This letter neither scolded, nor bewailed, nor desponded,

but it told the truth with great force and vigor. Of course it had but slight results, comparatively speaking; still it did something, and the final success of the Revolution is due to the series of strong truth-telling letters, of which this is an example, as much as to any one thing done by Washington. There was need of some one, not only to fight battles and lead armies, but to drive Congress into some sort of harmony, spur the careless and indifferent to action, arouse the States, and kill various fatal delusions, and in Washington the robust teller of unwelcome truths was found.

Still, even the results actually obtained by such letters came but slowly, and Washington felt that he must strike at all hazards. Through Lafayette he tried to get De Rochambeau to agree to an immediate attack on New York. His army was on the very eve of dissolution, and he began with reason to doubt his own power of holding it together longer. The finances of the country were going ever faster to irremediable ruin, and it seemed impossible that anything could postpone open and avowed bankruptcy. So, with his army crumbling, mutinous, and half starved, he turned to his one unfailing resource of fighting, and tried to persuade De Rochambeau to join him. Under the circumstances, Washington was right to wish to risk a battle, and De Rochambeau, from his point of view, was equally so in refusing to take the offensive, unless the second division arrived or De Guichen came with his fleet, or the English force at New York was reduced.

In these debates and delays, mingled with an appeal to De Guichen in the West Indies, the summer was fast wearing away, and, by way of addition, early in September came tidings of the battle of Camden, and the utter rout of Gates's army. Despite his own needs and trials, Washington's first idea was to stem the current of disaster at the south, and he ordered the fresh Maryland troops to turn back at once and march to the Carolinas, but Gates fled so fast and far that it was some time before anything was heard of him. As more news came of Camden and its beaten general, Washington wrote to Rutledge that he should ultimately come southward. Meantime, he could only struggle with his own difficulties, and rack his brains for men and means to rescue the south. It must have seemed to Washington, in those lovely September days, as if fate could not have any worse trials in store, and that if he could only breast the troubles now surging about him, he might count on sure and speedy success. Yet the bitterest trial of all was even then hanging over his head, and with a sort of savage sarcasm it came upon him in one of those rare moments when he had an hour of rest and sunshine.

The story of Arnold's treason is easily told. Its romantic side has made it familiar to all Americans, and given it a factitious importance. Had it succeeded it would have opened opportunities of disaster to the American arms, although it would not have affected the final outcome of the Revolu-

tion. As it was it failed, and had no result whatever. It has passed into history simply as a picturesque episode, charged with possibilities which attract the imagination, but having, in itself, neither meaning nor consequences beyond the two conspirators. To us it is of interest, because it shows Washington in one of the sharpest and bitterest experiences of his life. Let us see how he met it and dealt with it.

From the day when the French landed, both De Rochambeau and Washington had been most anxious to meet. The French general had been particularly urgent, but it was difficult for Washington to get away. As he wrote on August 21: "We are about ten miles from the enemy. Our popular government imposes a necessity of great circumspection. If any misfortune should happen in my absence, it would be attended with every inconvenience. I will, however, endeavor if possible, and as soon as possible, to meet you at some convenient rendezvous." In accordance with this promise, a few weeks later, he left Greene in command of the army, and, not without misgivings, started on September 18 to meet De Rochambeau. On his way he had an interview with Arnold, who came to him to show a letter from the loyalist Colonel Robinson, and thus disarm suspicion as to his doings. On the 20th, the day when André and Arnold met to arrange the terms of the sale, Washington was with De Rochambeau at Hartford. News had arrived, meantime, that De Guichen had

sailed for Europe; the command of the sea was therefore lost, and the opportunity for action had gone by. There was no need for further conference, and Washington accordingly set out on his return at once, two or three days earlier than he had intended.

He was accompanied by his own staff, and by Knox and Lafayette with their officers. With him, too, went the young Count Dumas, who has left a description of their journey, and of the popular enthusiasm displayed in the towns through which they passed. In one village, which they reached after nightfall, all the people turned out, the children bearing torches, and men and women hailed Washington as father, and pressed about him to touch the hem of his garments. Turning to Dumas he said, "We may be beaten by the English; it is the chance of war; but there is the army they will never conquer." Political leaders grumbled, and military officers caballed, but the popular feeling went out to Washington with a sure and utter confidence. The people in that little village recognized the great and unselfish leader as they recognized Lincoln a century later, and from the masses of the people no one ever heard the cry that Washington was cold or unsympathetic. They loved him, and believed in him, and such a manifestation of their devotion touched him deeply. His spirits rose under the spell of appreciation and affection, always so strong upon human nature, and he rode away from Fishkill the next morning at daybreak with a light heart.

The company was pleasant and lively, the morning was fair, and as they approached Arnold's headquarters at the Robinson house, Washington turned off to the redoubts by the river, telling the young men that they were all in love with Mrs. Arnold and would do well to go straight on and breakfast with her. Hamilton and McHenry followed his advice, and while they were at breakfast a note was brought to Arnold. It was the letter of warning from André announcing his capture, which Colonel Jameson, who ought to have been cashiered for doing it, had forwarded. Arnold at once left the table, and saying that he was going to West Point, jumped into his boat and was rowed rapidly down the river to the British man-of-war. Washington on his arrival was told that Arnold had gone to the fort, and so after a hasty breakfast he went over there himself. On reaching West Point no salute broke the stillness, and no guard turned out to receive him. He was astonished to learn that his arrival was unexpected, and that Arnold had not been there for two days. Still unsuspecting he inspected the works, and then returned.

Meantime, the messenger sent to Hartford with the papers taken on André reached the Robinson house and delivered them to Hamilton, together with a letter of confession from André himself. Hamilton read them, and hurrying out met Washington just coming up from the river. He took his chief aside, said a few words to him in a low

voice, and they went into the house together. When they came out, Washington looked as calm as ever, and calling to Lafayette and Knox gave them the papers, saying simply, "Whom can we trust now?" He dispatched Hamilton at once to try to intercept Arnold at Verplanck's Point, but it was too late; the boat had passed, and Arnold was safe on board the Vulture. This done, Washington bade his staff sit down with him at dinner, as the general was absent, and Mrs. Arnold was ill in her room. Dinner over, he immediately set about guarding the post, which had been so near betrayal. To Colonel Wade at West Point he wrote: "Arnold has gone to the enemy; you are in command, be vigilant." To Jameson he sent word to guard André closely. To the colonels and commanders of various outlying regiments he sent orders to bring up their troops. Everything was done that should have been done, quickly, quietly, and without comment. The most sudden and appalling treachery had failed to shake his nerve, or confuse his mind.

Yet the strong and silent man was wrung to the quick, and when everything possible had been done, and he had retired to his room, the guard outside the door heard him marching back and forth through all the weary night. The one thing he least expected, because he least understood it, had come to pass. He had been a good and true friend to the villain who had fled, for Arnold's reckless bravery and dare-devil fighting had appealed to

the strongest passion of his nature, and he had stood by him always. He had grieved over the refusal of Congress to promote him in due order and had interceded with ultimate success in his behalf. He had sympathized with him in his recent troubles in Philadelphia, and had administered the reprimand awarded by the court-martial so that rebuke seemed turned to praise. He had sought to give him every opportunity that a soldier could desire, and had finally conferred upon him the command of West Point. He had admired his courage and palliated his misconduct, and now the scoundrel had turned on him and fled. Mingled with the bitterness of these memories of betrayed confidence was the torturing ignorance of how far this base treachery had extended. For all he knew there might be a brood of traitors about him in the very citadel of America. We can never know Washington's thoughts at that time, for he was ever silent, but as we listen in imagination to the sound of the even footfalls which the guard heard all through that September night, we can dimly guess the feelings of the strong and passionate nature, wounded and distressed almost beyond endurance.

There is but little more to tell. The conspiracy stopped with Arnold. He had no accomplices, and meant to deliver the post and pocket the booty alone. The British tried to spread the idea that other officers had been corrupted, but the attempt failed, and Washington's prompt measures of

defense checked any movement against the forts. Every effort was made by Clinton to save André, but in vain. He was tried by a court composed of the highest officers in the American service, among whom was Lafayette. On his own statement, but one decision was possible. He was condemned as a spy, and as a spy he was sentenced to be hanged. He made a manly appeal against the manner of his death, and begged to be shot. Washington declined to interfere, and André went to the gallows.

The British, at the time, and some of their writers afterwards, attacked Washington for insisting on this mode of execution, but there never was an instance in his career when he was more entirely right. André was a spy and briber, who sought to ruin the American cause by means of the treachery of an American general. It was a dark and dangerous game, and he knew that he staked his life on the result. He failed, and paid the penalty. Washington could not permit, he would have been grossly and feebly culpable if he had permitted, such an attempt to pass without extreme punishment. He was generous and magnanimous, but he was not a sentimentalist, and he punished this miserable treason, so far as he could reach it, as it deserved. It is true that André was a man of talent, well-bred and courageous, and of engaging manners. He deserved all the sympathy and sorrow which he excited at the time, but nothing more. He was not only technically a spy, but he

had sought his ends by bribery, he had prostituted a flag of truce, and he was to be richly paid for his work. It was all hire and salary. No doubt André was patriotic and loyal. Many spies have been the same, and have engaged in their dangerous exploits from the highest motives. Nathan Hale, whom the British hanged without compunction, was as well-born and well-bred as André, and as patriotic as man could be, and moreover he was a spy and nothing more. André was a trafficker in bribes and treachery, and however we may pity his fate, his name has no proper place in the great temple at Westminster, where all English-speaking people bow with reverence, and only a most perverted sentimentality could conceive that it was fitting to erect a monument to his memory in this country.

Washington sent André to the gallows because it was his duty to do so, but he pitied him none the less, and whatever he may have thought of the means André employed to effect his end, he made no comment upon him, except to say that "he met his fate with that fortitude which was to be expected from an accomplished man and gallant officer." As to Arnold, he was almost equally silent. When obliged to refer to him he did so in the plainest and simplest way, and only in a familiar letter to Laurens do we get a glimpse of his feelings. He wrote: "I am mistaken if at this time Arnold is undergoing the torment of a mental hell. He wants feeling. From some traits of his

character which have lately come to my knowledge, he seems to have been so hackneyed in villainy, and so lost to all sense of honor and shame, that, while his faculties will enable him to continue his sordid pursuits, there will be no time for remorse." With this single expression of measureless contempt, Washington let Arnold drop from his life. The first shock had touched him to the quick, although it could not shake his steady mind. Reflection revealed to him the extraordinary baseness of Arnold's real character, and he cast the thought of him out forever, content to leave the traitor to the tender mercies of history. The calmness and dignity, the firmness and deep feeling which Washington exhibited, are of far more interest than the abortive treason, and have as real a value now as they had then, when suspicion for a moment ran riot, and men wondered "whom they could trust."

The treason of Arnold swept like a black cloud across the sky, broke, and left everything as before. That such a base peril should have existed was alarming and hateful. That it should have been exploded harmlessly made all men give a deep sigh of relief. But neither the treason nor its discovery altered the current of events one jot. The summer had come and gone. The French had arrived, and no blow had been struck. There was nothing to show for the campaign but inaction, disappointment, and the loss of the Carolinas. With the commander-in-chief, through it all, were

ever present two great questions, getting more portentous and more difficult of solution with each succeeding day. How he was to keep his army in existence was one, and how he was to hold the government together was the other. He had thirteen tired States, a general government almost impotent, a bankrupt treasury, and a broken credit. The American Revolution had come down to the question of whether the brain, will, and nerve of one man could keep the machine going long enough to find fit opportunity for a final and decisive stroke. Washington had confidence in the people of the country and in himself, but the difficulties in the way were huge, and the means of surmounting them slight. There is here and there a passionate undertone in the letters of this period, which shows us the moments when the waves of trouble and disaster seemed to sweep over him. But the feeling passed, or was trampled under foot, for there was no break in the steady fight against untoward circumstances, or in the grim refusal to accept defeat.

It is almost impossible now to conceive the actual condition at that time of every matter of detail which makes military and political existence possible. No general phrases can do justice to the situation of the army; and the petty miseries and privations, which made life unendurable, went on from day to day in ever varying forms. While Washington was hearing the first ill news from the south and struggling with the problem on that

side, and at the same time was planning with Lafayette how to take advantage of the French succors, the means of subsisting his army were wholly giving out. The men actually had no food. For days, as Washington wrote, there was no meat at all in camp. Goaded by hunger, a Connecticut regiment mutinied. They were brought back to duty, but held out steadily for their pay, which they had not received for five months. Indeed, the whole army was more or less mutinous, and it was only by the utmost tact that Washington kept them from wholesale desertion. After the summer had passed and the chance for a decisive campaign had gone with it, the excitement of expected action ceased to sustain the men, and the unclothed, unpaid, unfed soldiers began again to get restive. We can imagine what the condition of the rank and file must have been when we find that Washington himself could not procure an express from the quartermaster-general, and was obliged to send a letter to the Minister of France by the unsafe and slow medium of the post. He was expected to carry on a war against a rich and powerful enemy, and he could not even pay a courier to carry his dispatches.

With the commander-in-chief thus straitened, the sufferings of the men grew to be intolerable, and the spirit of revolt which had been checked through the summer began again to appear. At last, in January, 1781, it burst all the bounds. The Pennsylvania line mutinied and threatened

Congress. Attempts on the part of the English to seduce them failed, but they remained in a state of open rebellion. The officers were powerless, and it looked as if the disaffection would spread, and the whole army go to pieces in the very face of the enemy. Washington held firm, and intended in his unshaken way to bring them back to their duty without yielding in a dangerous fashion. But the government of Pennsylvania, at last thoroughly frightened, rushed into the field, and patched up a compromise which contained most perilous concessions. The natural consequence was a fresh mutiny in the New Jersey line, and this time Washington determined that he would not be forestalled. He sent forward at once some regiments of loyal troops, suppressed the mutiny suddenly and with a strong hand, and hanged two of the ringleaders. The difficulty was conquered, and discipline restored.

To take this course required great boldness, for these mutinies were of no ordinary character. In the first place, it was impossible to tell whether any troops would do their duty against their fellows, and failure would have been fatal. In the second place, the grievances of the soldiers were very great, and their complaints were entirely righteous. Washington felt the profoundest sympathy with his men, and it was no easy matter to maintain order with soldiers tried almost beyond endurance, against their comrades whose claims were just. Two things saved the army. One was

Washington's great influence with the men and their utter belief in him. The other was the quality of the men themselves. Lafayette said they were the most patient and patriotic soldiers the world had seen, and it is easy to believe him. The wonder is, not that they mutinied when they did, but that the whole army had not mutinied and abandoned the struggle years before. The misfortunes and mistakes of the Revolution, to whomever due, were in no respect to be charged to the army, and the conduct of the troops through all the dreary months of starvation and cold and poverty is a proof of the intelligent patriotism and patient courage of the American soldier which can never be gainsaid. To fight successful battles is the test of a good general, but to hold together a suffering army through years of unexampled privations, to meet endless failure of details with unending expedients, and then to fight battles and plan campaigns, shows a leader who was far more than a good general. Such multiplied trials and difficulties are overcome only by a great soldier who with small means achieves large results, and by a great man who by force of will and character can establish with all who follow him a power which no miseries can conquer, and no suffering diminish.

The height reached by the troubles in the army and their menacing character had, however, a good as well as a bad side. They penetrated the indifference and carelessness of both Congress and the

States. Gentlemen in the confederate and local administrations and legislatures woke up to a realizing sense that the dissolution of the army meant a general wreck, in which their own necks would be in very considerable danger; and they also had an uneasy feeling that starving and mutinous soldiers were very uncertain in taking revenge. The condition of the army gave a sudden and piercing reality to Washington's indignant words to Mathews on October 4: "At a time when public harmony is so essential, when we should aid and assist each other with all our abilities, when our hearts should be open to information and our hands ready to administer relief, to find distrusts and jealousies taking possession of the mind and a party spirit prevailing affords a most melancholy reflection, and forebodes no good." The hoarse murmur of impending mutiny emphasized strongly the words written on the same day to Duane: "The history of the war is a history of false hopes and temporary expedients. Would to God they were to end here."

The events in the south, too, had a sobering effect. The congressional general Gates had not proved a success. His defeat at Camden had been terribly complete, and his flight had been too rapid to inspire confidence in his capacity for recuperation. The members of Congress were thus led to believe that as managers of military matters they left much to be desired; and when Washington, on October 11, addressed to them one of his long

and admirable letters on reorganization, it was received in a very chastened spirit. They had listened to many such letters before, and had benefited by them always a little, but danger and defeat gave this one peculiar point. They therefore accepted the situation, and adopted all the suggestions of the commander-in-chief. They also in the same reasonable frame of mind determined that Washington should select the next general for the southern army. A good deal could have been saved had this decision been reached before; but even now it was not too late. October 14, Washington appointed Greene to this post of difficulty and danger, and Greene's assumption of the command marks the turning-point in the tide of disaster, and the beginning of the ultimate expulsion of the British from the only portion of the colonies where they had made a tolerable campaign.

The uses of adversity, moreover, did not stop here. They extended to the States, which began to grow more vigorous in action, and to show signs of appreciating the gravity of the situation and the duties which rested upon them. This change and improvement both in Congress and the States came none too soon. Indeed, as it was, the results of their renewed efforts were too slow to be felt at once by the army, and mutinies broke out even after the new spirit had shown itself. Washington also sent Knox to travel from State to State, to see the various governors, and lay the situation of affairs before them; yet even with such a text it

was a difficult struggle to get the States to make quick and strong exertions sufficient to prevent a partial mutiny from becoming a general revolt. The lesson, however, had had its effect. For the moment, at least, the cause was saved. The worst defects were temporarily remedied, and something was done toward supplies and subsistence. The army would be able to exist through another winter, and face another summer. Then the next campaign might bring the decisive moment; but still, who could tell? Years, instead of months, might yet elapse before the end was reached, and then no man could say what the result would be.

Washington saw plainly enough that the relief and improvement were only temporary, and that carelessness and indifference were likely to return, and be more case-hardened than ever. He was too strong and sane a man to waste time in fighting shadows or in nourishing himself with hopes. He dealt with the present as he found it, and fought down difficulties as they sprang up in his path. But he was also a man of extraordinary prescience, with a foresight as penetrating as it was judicious. It was, perhaps, his most remarkable gift, and while he controlled the present he studied the future. Outside of the operations of armies, and the plans of campaign, he saw, as the war progressed, that the really fatal perils were involved in the political system. At the beginning of the Revolution there was no organization outside the local state governments. Congress voted and resolved

in favor of anything that seemed proper, and the States responded to their appeal. In the first flush of revolution, and the first excitement of freedom, this was all very well. But as the early passion cooled, and a long and stubborn struggle, replete with sufferings and defeat, developed itself, the want of system began to appear.

One of the earliest tasks of Congress was the formation of articles for a general government, but state jealousies, and the delays incident to the movements of thirteen sovereignties, prevented their adoption until the war was nearly over. Washington, suffering from all the complicated troubles of jarring States and general incoherence, longed for and urged the adoption of the act of confederation. He saw sooner than any one else, and with more painful intensity, the need of better union and more energetic government. As the days and months of difficulties and trials went by, the suggestions on this question in his letters grew more frequent and more urgent, and they showed the insight of the statesman and practical man of affairs. How much he hoped from the final acceptance of the act of confederation it is not easy to say, but he hoped for some improvement certainly. When at last it went into force, he saw almost at once that it would not do, and in the spring of 1780 he knew it to be a miserable failure. The system which had been established was really no better than that which had preceded it. With alarm and disgust Washington found himself flung

back on what he called "the pernicious state system," and with worse prospects than ever.

Up to the time of the Revolution he had never given attention to the philosophy or science of government, but when it fell to his lot to fight the war for independence he perceived almost immediately the need of a strong central government, and his suggestions, scattered broadcast among his correspondents, manifested a knowledge of the conditions of the political problem possessed by no one else at that period. When he was satisfied of the failure of the confederation, his efforts to improve the existing administration multiplied, and he soon had the assistance of his aide-de-camp, Alexander Hamilton, who then wrote, although little more than a boy, his remarkable letters on government and finance, which were the first full expositions of the political necessities from which sprang the Constitution of the United States. Washington was vigorous in action and methodical in business, while the system of thirteen sovereignties was discordant, disorderly, and feeble in execution. He knew that the vices inherent in the confederation were ineradicable and fatal, and he also knew that it was useless to expect any comprehensive reforms until the war was over. The problem before him was whether the existing machine could be made to work until the British were finally driven from the country. The winter of 1780–81 was marked, therefore, on his part, by an urgent striving for union, and by unceasing efforts to mend and im-

prove the rickety system of the confederation. It was with this view that he secured the dispatch of Laurens, whom he carefully instructed, to get money in Paris; for he was satisfied that it was only possible to tide over the financial difficulties by foreign loans from those interested in our success. In the same spirit he worked to bring about the establishment of executive departments, which was finally accomplished, after delays that sorely tried his patience. These two cases were but the most important among many of similar character, for he was always at work on these perplexing questions.

It is an astonishing proof of the strength and power of his mind that he was able to solve the daily questions of army existence, to deal with the allies, to plan attacks on New York, to watch and scheme for the southern department, to cope with Arnold's treason, with mutiny, and with administrative imbecility, and at the very same time consider the gravest governmental problems, and send forth wise suggestions, which met the exigencies of the moment, and laid the foundation of much that afterwards appeared in the Constitution of the United States. He was not a speculator on government, and after his fashion he was engaged in dealing with the questions of the day and hour. Yet the ideas that he put forth in this time of confusion and conflict and expedients were so vitally sound and wise that they deserve the most careful study in relation to after events. The

political trials and difficulties of this period were the stern teachers from whom Washington acquired the knowledge and experience which made him the principal agent in bringing about the formation and adoption of the Constitution of the United States. We shall have occasion to examine these opinions and views more closely when they were afterwards brought into actual play. At this point it is only necessary to trace the history of the methods by which he solved the problem of the Revolution before the political system of the confederation became absolutely useless.

CHAPTER X

YORKTOWN

The failure to accomplish anything in the north caused Washington, as the year drew to a close, to turn his thoughts once more toward a combined movement at the south. In pursuance of this idea, he devised a scheme of uniting with the Spaniards in the seizure of Florida, and of advancing thence through Georgia to assail the English in the rear. De Rochambeau did not approve the plan, and it was abandoned; but the idea of a southern movement was still kept steadily in sight. The governing thought now was, not to protect this place or that, but to cast aside everything else in order to strike one great blow which would finish the war. Where he could do this, time alone would show, but if one follows the correspondence closely, it is apparent that Washington's military instinct turned more and more toward the south.

In that department affairs changed their aspect rapidly. January 17, Morgan won his brilliant victory at the Cowpens, withdrew in good order with his prisoners, and united his army with that of Greene. Cornwallis was terribly disappointed by this unexpected reverse, but he determined to

push on, defeat the combined American army, and then join the British forces on the Chesapeake. Greene was too weak to risk a battle, and made a masterly retreat of two hundred miles before Cornwallis, escaping across the Dan only twelve hours ahead of the enemy. The moment the British moved away, Greene recrossed the river and hung upon their rear. For a month he kept in their neighborhood, checking the rising of the Tories, and declining battle. At last he received reinforcements, felt strong enough to stand his ground, and on March 15 the battle of Guilford Court House was fought. It was a sharp and bloody fight; the British had the advantage, and Greene abandoned the field, bringing off his army in good order. Cornwallis, on his part, had suffered so heavily, however, that his victory turned to ashes. On the 18th he was in full retreat, with Greene in hot chase, and it was not until the 28th that he succeeded in getting over the Deep River and escaping to Wilmington. Thence he determined to push on and transfer the seat of war to the Chesapeake. Greene, with the boldness and quickness which showed him to be a soldier of a high order, now dropped the pursuit and turned back to fight the British in detachments and free the southern States. There is no need to follow him in the brilliant operations which ensued, and by which he achieved this result. It is sufficient to say here that he had altered the whole aspect of the war, forced Cornwallis into Virginia within reach of

Washington, and begun the work of redeeming the Carolinas.

The troops which Cornwallis intended to join had been sent in detachments to Virginia during the winter and spring. The first body had arrived early in January under the command of Arnold, and a general marauding and ravaging took place. A little later General Phillips arrived with reinforcements and took command. On May 13, General Phillips died, and a week later Cornwallis appeared at Petersburg, assumed control, and sent Arnold back to New York.

Meantime Washington, though relieved by Morgan's and Greene's admirable work, had a most trying and unhappy winter and spring. He sent every man he could spare, and more than he ought to have spared, to Greene, and he stripped himself still further when the invasion of Virginia began. But for the most part he was obliged, from lack of any naval strength, to stand helplessly by and see more and more British troops sent to the south, and witness the ravaging of his native State, without any ability to prevent it. To these grave trials was added a small one, which stung him to the quick. The British came up the Potomac, and Lund Washington, in order to preserve Mount Vernon, gave them refreshments, and treated them in a conciliatory manner. He meant well but acted ill, and Washington wrote: —

"It would have been a less painful circumstance to me to have heard that, in consequence of your

non-compliance with their request, they had burnt my house and laid the plantation in ruins. You ought to have considered yourself as my representative, and should have reflected on the bad example of communicating with the enemy, and making a voluntary offer of refreshments to them, with a view to prevent a conflagration."

What a clear glimpse this little episode gives of the earnestness of the man who wrote these lines. He could not bear the thought that any favor should be shown him on any pretense. He was ready to take his share of the marauding and pillaging with the rest, but he was deeply indignant at the idea that any one representing him should even appear to ask a favor of the British.

Altogether, the spring of 1781 was very trying, for there was nothing so galling to Washington as to be unable to fight. He wanted to get to the south, but he was bound hand and foot by lack of force. Yet the obstacles did not daunt or depress him. He wrote in June that he felt sure of bringing the war to a happy conclusion, and in the division of the British forces he saw his opportunity taking shape. Greene had the southern forces well in hand. Cornwallis was equally removed from Clinton on the north and Rawdon on the south, and had come within reach; so that if he could but have naval strength he could fall upon Cornwallis with superior force and crush him. In naval matters fortune thus far had dealt hardly with him, yet he could not but feel that a French fleet of

sufficient force must soon come. He grasped the situation with a master-hand, and began to prepare the way. Still he kept his counsel strictly to himself, and set to work to threaten, and if possible to attack, New York, not with much hope of succeeding in any such attempt, but with a view of frightening Clinton and of inducing him either to withdraw troops from Virginia, or at least to withhold reinforcements. As he began his Virginian campaign in this distant and remote fashion at the mouth of the Hudson, he was cheered by news that De Grasse, the French admiral, had sent recruits to Newport, and intended to come himself to the American coast. He at once wrote De Grasse not to determine absolutely to come to New York, hinting that it might prove more advisable to operate to the southward. It required great tact to keep the French fleet where he needed it, and yet not reveal his intentions, and nothing showed Washington's foresight more plainly than the manner in which he made the moves in this campaign, when miles of space and weeks of time separated him from the final object of his plans. To trace this mastery of details, and the skill with which every point was remembered and covered, would require a long and minute narrative. They can only be indicated here sufficiently to show how exactly each movement fitted in its place, and how all together brought the great result.

Fortified by the good news from De Grasse, Washington had an interview with De Rocham-

beau, and effected a junction with the French army. Thus strengthened, he opened his campaign against Cornwallis by beginning a movement against Clinton. The troops were massed above the city, and an effort was made to surprise the upper posts and destroy Delancey's partisan corps. The attempt, although well planned, failed of its immediate purpose, giving Washington opportunity only for an effective reconnoissance of the enemy's positions. But the move was perfectly successful in its real and indirect object. Clinton was alarmed. He began to write to Cornwallis that troops should be returned to New York, and he gave up absolutely the idea of sending more men to Virginia. Having thus convinced Clinton that New York was menaced, Washington then set to work to familiarize skillfully the minds of his allies and of Congress with the idea of a southern campaign. With this end in view, he wrote on August 2 that, if more troops arrived from Virginia, New York would be impracticable, and that the next point was the south. The only contingency, as he set forth, was the all-important one of obtaining naval superiority. August 15 this essential condition gave promise of fulfillment, for on that day definite news arrived that De Grasse with his fleet was on his way to the Chesapeake. Without a moment's hesitation, Washington began to move, and at the same time he sent an urgent letter to the New England governors, demanding troops with an earnestness which he had never surpassed.

In Virginia, meanwhile, during these long midsummer days, while Washington was waiting and planning, Cornwallis had been going up and down, harrying, burning, and plundering. His cavalry had scattered the legislature, and driven Governor Jefferson in headlong flight over the hills, while property to the value of more than three millions had been destroyed. Lafayette, sent by Washington to maintain the American cause, had been too weak to act decisively, but he had been true to his general's teaching, and, refusing battle, had hung upon the flanks of the British and harassed and checked them. Joined by Wayne, he had fought an unsuccessful engagement at Green Springs, but brought off his army, and with steady pertinacity followed the enemy to the coast, gathering strength as he moved. Now, when all was at last ready, Washington began to draw his net about Cornwallis, whom he had been keenly watching during the victorious marauding of the summer. On the news of the coming of the French fleet, he wrote to Lafayette to be prepared to join him when he reached Virginia, to retain Wayne, who intended to join Greene, and to stop Cornwallis at all hazards, if he attempted to go southward.

Cornwallis, however, had no intention of moving. He had seen the peril of his position, and had wished to withdraw to Charleston; but the ministry, highly pleased with his performances, wished him to remain on the Chesapeake, and decisive orders came to him to take a permanent post

in that region. Clinton, moreover, was jealous of Cornwallis, and, impressed and deceived by Washington's movements, he not only sent no reinforcements, but detained three thousand Hessians, who had lately arrived. Cornwallis, therefore, had no choice, and with much writing for aid, and some protesting, he obeyed his orders, planted himself at Yorktown and Gloucester, and proceeded to fortify, while Lafayette kept close watch upon him. Cornwallis was a good soldier and a clever man, suffering, as Burgoyne did, from a stupid ministry and a dull and jealous commander-in-chief. Thus hampered and burdened, he was ready to fall a victim to the operations of a really great general, whom his official superiors in England undervalued and despised.

August 17, as soon as he had set his own machinery in motion, Washington wrote to De Grasse to meet him in the Chesapeake. He was working now more anxiously and earnestly than at any time in the Revolution, not merely because he felt that success depended on the blow, but because he descried a new and alarming danger. He had perceived it in June, and the idea pursued him until all was over, and kept recurring in his letters during this strained and eager summer. To Washington's eyes, watching campaigns and government at home and the politics of Europe abroad, the signs of exhaustion, of mediation, and of coming peace across the Atlantic were plainly visible. If peace should come as things then were, America

would get independence, and be shorn of many of her most valuable possessions. The sprawling British campaign of maraud and plunder, so bad in a military point of view, and about to prove fatal to Cornwallis, would, in case of sudden cessation of hostilities, be capable of the worst construction. Time, therefore, had become of the last importance. The decisive blow must be given at once, and before the slow political movements could come to a head. On July 14, Washington had his plan mapped out. He wrote in his diary:—

"Matters having now come to a crisis, and a decided plan to be determined on, I was obliged — from the shortness of Count De Grasse's promised stay on this coast, the apparent disinclination of their naval officers to force the harbor of New York, and the feeble compliance of the States with my requisitions for men hitherto, and the little prospect of greater exertions in future — to give up all ideas of attacking New York, and instead thereof to remove the French troops and a detachment from the American army to the Head of Elk, to be transported to Virginia for the purpose of coöperating with the force from the West Indies against the troops in that State."

Like most of Washington's plans, this one was clear-cut and direct, and looks now simple enough, but at the moment it was hedged with almost inconceivable difficulties at every step. The ever-present and ever-growing obstacles at home were there as usual. Appeals to Morris for money

were met by the most discouraging responses, and the States seemed more lethargic than ever. Neither men nor supplies could be obtained; neither transportation nor provision for the march could be promised. Then, too, in addition to all this, came a wholly new set of stumbling-blocks arising among the allies. Everything hinged on the naval force. Washington needed it for a short time only; but for that crucial moment he must have not only superiority but supremacy at sea. Every French ship that could be reached must be in the Chesapeake, and Washington had had too many French fleets slip away from him at the last moment and bring everything to naught to take any chances in this direction. To bring about his naval supremacy required the utmost tact and good management, and that he succeeded is one of the chief triumphs of the campaign. In fact, at the very outset he was threatened in this quarter with a serious defection. De Barras, with the squadron of the American station, was at Boston, and it was essential that he should be united with De Grasse at Yorktown. But De Barras was nettled by the favoritism which had made De Grasse, his junior in service, his superior in command. He determined therefore to take advantage of his orders and sail away to the north to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and leave De Grasse to fight it out alone. It is a hard thing to beat an opposing army, but it is equally hard to bring human jealousies and ambitions into the narrow path of

self-sacrifice and subordination. Alarmed beyond measure at the suggested departure of the Boston squadron, Washington wrote a letter, which De Rochambeau signed with him, urging De Barras to turn his fleet toward the Chesapeake. It was a skillfully drawn missive, an adroit mingling of appeals to honor and sympathy and of vigorous demands to perform an obvious duty. The letter did its work, the diplomacy of Washington was successful, and De Barras suppressed his feelings of disappointment, and agreed to go to the Chesapeake and serve under De Grasse.

This point made, Washington pushed on his preparations, or rather pushed on despite his lack of preparations, and on August 17, as has been said, wrote to De Grasse to meet him in the Chesapeake. He left the larger part of his own troops with Heath, to whom in carefully drawn instructions he intrusted the grave duty of guarding the Hudson and watching the British in New York. This done, he gathered his forces together, and on August 21 the army started on its march to the south. On the 23d and 24th it crossed the Hudson, without annoyance from the British of any kind. Washington had threatened New York so effectively, and manœuvred so successfully, that Clinton could not be shaken in his belief that the real object of the Americans was his own army; and it was not until September 6 that he fully realized that his enemy was going to the south, and that Cornwallis was in danger. He even then

hesitated and delayed, but finally dispatched Admiral Graves with the fleet to the Chesapeake. The Admiral came upon the French early on September 5, the very day that Washington was rejoicing in the news that De Grasse had arrived in the Chesapeake and had landed St. Simon and three thousand men to support Lafayette. As soon as the English fleet appeared, the French, although many of their men were on shore, sailed out and gave battle. An indecisive action ensued, in which the British suffered so much that five days later they burned one of their frigates and withdrew to New York. De Grasse returned to his anchorage, to find that De Barras had come in from Newport with eight ships and ten transports carrying ordnance.

While everything was thus moving well toward the consummation of the campaign, Washington, in the midst of his delicate and important work of breaking camp and beginning his rapid march to the south, was harassed by the ever-recurring difficulties of the feeble and bankrupt government of the confederation. He wrote again and again to Morris for money, and finally got some. His demands for men and supplies remained almost unheeded, but somehow he got provisions enough to start. He foresaw the most pressing need, and sent messages in all directions for shipping to transport his army down the Chesapeake. No one responded, but still he gathered the transports; at first a few, then more, and finally, after many

delays, enough to move his army to Yorktown. The spectacle of such a struggle, so heroically made, one would think, might have inspired every soul on the continent with enthusiasm; but at this very moment, while Washington was breaking camp and marching southward, Congress was considering the reduction of the army! — which was as appropriate as it would have been for the English Parliament to have reduced the navy on the eve of Trafalgar, or for Lincoln to have advised the restoration of the army to a peace footing while Grant was fighting in the Wilderness. The fact was that the Continental Congress was weakened in ability and very tired in point of nerve and will-power. They saw that peace was coming, and naturally thought that the sooner they could get it the better. They entirely failed to see, as Washington saw, that in a too sudden peace lurked the danger of the *uti possidetis*, and that the mere fact of peace by no means implied necessarily complete success. They did not, of course, effect their reductions, but they remained inert, and so for the most part did the state governments, becoming drags upon the wheels of war instead of helpers to the man who was driving the Revolution forward to its goal. Both state and confederate governments still meant well, but they were worn out and relaxed. Yet over and through all these heavy masses of misapprehension and feebleness, Washington made his way. Here again all that can be said is that somehow or other the thing was done. We can take account of the

resisting forces, but we cannot tell just how they were dealt with. We only know that one strong man trampled them down and got what he wanted done.

Pushing on after the joyful news of the arrival of De Grasse had been received, Washington left the army to go by water from the Head of Elk, and hurried to Mount Vernon, accompanied by De Rochambeau. It was six years since he had seen his home. He had left it a Virginian colonel, full of forebodings for his country, with a vast and unknown problem awaiting solution at his hands. He returned to it the first soldier of his day, after six years of battle and trial, of victory and defeat, on the eve of the last and crowning triumph. As he paused on the well-beloved spot, and gazed across the broad and beautiful river at his feet, thoughts and remembrances must have come thronging to his mind which it is given to few men to know. He lingered there two days, and then pressing on again, was in Williamsburg on the 14th, and on the 17th went on board the Ville de Paris to congratulate De Grasse on his victory, and to concert measures for the siege.

The meeting was most agreeable. All had gone well, all promised well, and everything was smiling and harmonious. Yet they were on the eve of the greatest peril which occurred in the campaign. Washington had managed to scrape together enough transports; but his almost unassisted labors had taken time, and delay had followed.

Then the transports were slow, and winds and tides were uncertain, and there was further delay. The interval permitted De Grasse to hear that the British fleet had received reinforcements, and to become nervous in consequence. He wanted to get out to sea; the season was advancing, and he was anxious to return to the West Indies; and above all he did not wish to fight in the bay. He therefore proposed firmly and vigorously to leave two ships in the river, and stand out to sea with his fleet. The Yorktown campaign began to look as if it had reached its conclusion. Once again Washington wrote one of his masterly letters of expostulation and remonstrance, and once more he prevailed, aided by the reasoning and appeals of Lafayette, who carried the message. De Grasse consented to stay, and Washington, grateful beyond measure, wrote him that "a great mind knows how to make personal sacrifice to secure an important general good." Under the circumstances, and in view of the general truth of this complimentary sentiment, one cannot help rejoicing that De Grasse had "a great mind."

At all events he stayed, and thereafter everything went well. The northern army landed at Williamsburg and marched for Yorktown on the 28th. They reconnoitred the outlying works the next day, and prepared for an immediate assault; but in the night Cornwallis abandoned all his outside works and withdrew into the town. Washington thereupon advanced at once, and prepared for

the siege. On the night of the 5th, the trenches were opened only six hundred yards from the enemy's line, and in three days the first parallel was completed. On the 11th the second parallel was begun, and on the 14th the American batteries played on the two advanced redoubts with such effect that the breaches were pronounced practicable. Washington at once ordered an assault. The smaller redoubt was stormed by the Americans under Hamilton and taken in ten minutes. The other, larger and more strongly garrisoned, was carried by the French with equal gallantry, after half an hour's fighting. During the assault Washington stood in an embrasure of the grand battery watching the advance of the men. He was always given to exposing himself recklessly when there was fighting to be done, but not when he was only an observer. This night, however, he was much exposed to the enemy's fire. One of his aides, anxious and disturbed for his safety, told him that the place was perilous. "If you think so," was the quiet answer, "you are at liberty to step back." The moment was too exciting, too fraught with meaning, to think of peril. The old fighting spirit of Braddock's field was unchained for the last time. He would have liked to head the American assault, sword in hand, and as he could not do that he stood as near his troops as he could, utterly regardless of the bullets whistling in the air about him. Who can wonder at his intense excitement at that moment? Others saw

a brilliant storming of two outworks, but to Washington the whole Revolution, and all the labor and thought and conflict of six years were culminating in the smoke and din on those redoubts, while out of the dust and heat of the sharp quick fight success was coming. He had waited long, and worked hard, and his whole soul went out as he watched the troops cross the abattis and scale the works. He could have no thought of danger then, and when all was over he turned to Knox and said, "The work is done, and well done. Bring me my horse."

Washington was not mistaken. The work was indeed done. Tarleton early in the siege had dashed out against Lauzun on the other side of the river and been repulsed. Cornwallis had been forced back steadily into the town, and his redoubts, as soon as taken, were included in the second parallel. A sortie to retake the redoubts failed, and a wild attempt to transport the army across the river was stopped by a gale of wind. On the 17th Cornwallis was compelled to face much bloody and useless slaughter, or to surrender. He chose the latter course, and after opening negotiations and trying in vain to obtain delay, finally signed the capitulation and gave up the town. The next day the troops marched out and laid down their arms. Over 7000 British and Hessian troops surrendered. It was a crushing defeat. The victorious army consisted in round numbers of 5500 continentals, 3500 militia, and

7000 French, and they were backed by the French fleet with entire control of the sea.

When Washington had once reached Yorktown with his fleet and army, the campaign was really at an end, for he held Cornwallis in an iron grip from which there was no escape. The masterly part of the Yorktown campaign lay in the manner in which it was brought about, in the management of so many elements, and in the rapidity of movement which carried an army without any proper supplies or means of transportation from New York to the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. The control of the sea had been the great advantage of the British from the beginning, and had enabled them to achieve all that they ever gained. With these odds against him, with no possibility of obtaining a fleet of his own, Washington saw that his only chance of bringing the war to a quick and successful issue was by means of the French. It is difficult to manage allied troops. It is still more difficult to manage allied troops and an allied fleet. Washington did both with infinite address, and won. The chief factor of his success in this direction lay in his profound personal influence on all men with whom he came in contact. His courtesy and tact were perfect, but he made no concessions, and never stooped. The proudest French noble who came here shrank from disagreement with the American general, and yet not one of them had anything but admiration and respect to express when they wrote of Washington in their memoirs,

diaries, and letters. He impressed them one and all with a sense of power and greatness which could not be disregarded. Many times he failed to get the French fleet in coöperation, but finally it came. Then he put forth all his influence and all his address, and thus he got De Barras to the Chesapeake, and kept De Grasse at Yorktown.

This was one side of the problem, the most essential because everything hinged on the fleet, but by no means the most harassing. The doubt about the control of the sea made it impossible to work steadily for a sufficient time toward any one end. It was necessary to have a plan for every contingency, and be ready to adopt any one of several plans at short notice. With a foresight and judgment that never failed, Washington planned an attack on New York, another on Yorktown, and a third on Charleston. The division of the British forces gave him his opportunity of striking at one point with an overwhelming force, but there was always the possibility of their suddenly reuniting. In the extreme south he felt reasonably sure that Greene would hold Rawdon, but he was obliged to deceive and amuse Clinton, and at the same time, with a ridiculously inferior force, to keep Cornwallis from marching to South Carolina. Partly by good fortune, partly by skill, Cornwallis was kept in Virginia, while by admirably managed feints and threats Clinton was held in New York in inactivity. When the decisive moment came, and it was evident that the control of the sea was to be

determined in the Chesapeake, Washington, overriding all sorts of obstacles, moved forward, despite a bankrupt and inert government, with a rapidity and daring which have been rarely equaled. It was a bold stroke to leave Clinton behind at the mouth of the Hudson, and only the quickness with which it was done, and the careful deception which had been practiced, made it possible. Once at Yorktown, there was little more to do. The combination was so perfect, and the judgment had been so sure, that Cornwallis was crushed as helplessly as if he had been thrown before the car of Juggernaut. There was really but little fighting, for there was no opportunity to fight. Washington held the British in a vice, and the utter helplessness of Cornwallis, the entire inability of such a good and gallant soldier even to struggle, are the most convincing proofs of the military genius of his antagonist.

CHAPTER XI

PEACE

Fortitude in misfortune is more common than composure in the hour of victory. The bitter medicine of defeat, however unpalatable, is usually extremely sobering, but the strong new wine of success generally sets the heads of poor humanity spinning, and leads often to worse results than folly. The capture of Cornwallis was enough to have turned the strongest head, for the moment at least, but it had no apparent effect upon the man who had brought it to pass, and who, more than any one else, knew what it meant. Unshaken and undismayed in the New Jersey winter, and among the complicated miseries of Valley Forge, Washington turned from the spectacle of a powerful British army laying down their arms as coolly as if he had merely fought a successful skirmish, or repelled a dangerous raid. He had that rare gift, the attribute of the strongest minds, of leaving the past to take care of itself. He never fretted over what could not be undone, nor dallied among pleasant memories while aught still remained to do. He wrote to Congress in words of quiet congratulation, through which pierced the devout and

solemn sense of the great deed accomplished, and then, while the salvos of artillery were still booming in his ears, and the shouts of victory were still rising about him, he set himself, after his fashion, to care for the future and provide for the immediate completion of his work.

He wrote to De Grasse, urging him to join in an immediate movement against Charleston, such as he had already suggested, and he presented in the strongest terms the opportunities now offered for the sudden and complete ending of the struggle. But the French admiral was by no means imbued with the tireless and determined spirit of Washington. He had had his fill even of victory, and was so eager to get back to the West Indies, where he was to fall a victim to Rodney, that he would not even transport troops to Wilmington. Thus deprived of the force which alone made comprehensive and extended movements possible, Washington returned, as he had done so often before, to making the best of cramped circumstances and straitened means. He sent all the troops he could spare to Greene, to help him in wresting the southern States from the enemy, the work to which he had in vain summoned De Grasse. This done, he prepared to go north. On his way he was stopped at Eltham by the illness and death of his wife's son, John Custis, a blow which he felt severely, and which saddened the great victory he had just achieved. Still the business of the State could not wait on private grief.

He left the house of mourning, and, pausing for an instant only at Mount Vernon, hastened on to Philadelphia. At the very moment of victory, and while honorable members were shaking each other's hands and congratulating each other that the war was now really over, the commander-in-chief had fallen again to writing them letters in the old strain, and was once more urging them to keep up the army, while he himself gave his personal attention to securing a naval force for the ensuing year, through the medium of Lafayette. Nothing was ever finished with Washington until it was really complete throughout, and he had as little time for rejoicing as he had for despondency or despair, while a British force still remained in the country. He probably felt that this was as untoward a time as he had ever met in a pretty large experience of unsuitable occasions, for offering sound advice, but he was not deterred thereby from doing it. This time, however, he was destined to an agreeable disappointment, for on his arrival at Philadelphia he found an excellent spirit prevailing in Congress. That body was acting cheerfully on his advice, it had filled the departments of the government, and set on foot such measures as it could to keep up the army. So Washington remained for some time at Philadelphia, helping and counseling Congress in its work, and writing to the States vigorous letters, demanding pay and clothing for the soldiers, ever uppermost in his thoughts.

But although Congress was compliant, Washington could not convince the country of the justice of his views, and of the continued need of energetic exertion. The steady relaxation of tone, which the strain of a long and trying war had produced, was accelerated by the brilliant victory of Yorktown. Washington for his own part had but little trust in the sense or the knowledge of his enemy. He felt that Yorktown was decisive, but he also thought that Great Britain would still struggle on, and that her talk of peace was very probably a mere blind, to enable her to gain time, and, by taking advantage of our relaxed and feeble condition, to strike again in hope of winning back all that had been lost. He therefore continued his appeals in behalf of the army, and reiterated everywhere the necessity for fresh and ample preparations.

As late as May 4 he wrote sharply to the States for men and money, saying that the change of ministry was likely to be adverse to peace, and that we were being lulled into a false and fatal sense of security. A few days later, on receiving information from Sir Guy Carleton of the address of the Commons to the king for peace, Washington wrote to Congress: "For my own part, I view our situation as such that, instead of relaxing, we ought to improve the present moment as the most favorable to our wishes. The British nation appear to me to be staggered, and almost ready to sink beneath the accumulating weight of debt and

misfortune. If we follow the blow with vigor and energy, I think the game is our own."

Again he wrote in July: "Sir Guy Carleton is using every art to soothe and lull our people into a state of security. Admiral Digby is capturing all our vessels, and suffocating as fast as possible in prison-ships all our seamen who will not enlist into the service of his Britannic Majesty; and Haldimand, with his savage allies, is scalping and burning on the frontiers." Facts always were the object of Washington's first regard, and while gentlemen on all sides were talking of peace, war was going on, and he could not understand the supineness which would permit our seamen to be suffocated, and our borderers scalped, because some people thought the war ought to be and practically was over. While the other side was fighting, he wished to be fighting too. A month later he wrote to Greene: "From the former infatuation, duplicity, and perverse system of British policy, I confess I am induced to doubt everything, to suspect everything." He could say heartily with the Trojan priest, "Quicquid id est timeo Danaos et dona ferentes." Yet again, a month later still, when the negotiations were really going forward in Paris, he wrote to McHenry: "If we are wise, let us prepare for the worst. There is nothing which will so soon produce a speedy and honorable peace as a state of preparation for war; and we must either do this, or lay our account to patch up an inglorious peace, after all the toil, blood, and treasure we have spent."

No man had done and given so much as Washington, and at the same time no other man had his love of thoroughness, and his indomitable fighting temper. He found few sympathizers, his words fell upon deaf ears, and he was left to struggle on and maintain his ground as best he might, without any substantial backing. As it turned out, England was more severely wounded than he dared to hope, and her desire for peace was real. But Washington's distrust and the active policy which he urged were, in the conditions of the moment, perfectly sound, both in a military and a political point of view. It made no real difference, however, whether he was right or wrong in his opinion. He could not get what he wanted, and he was obliged to drag through another year, fettered in his military movements, and oppressed with anxiety for the future. He longed to drive the British from New York, and was forced to content himself, as so often before, with keeping his army in existence. It was a trying time, and fruitful in nothing but anxious forebodings. All the fighting was confined to skirmishes of outposts, and his days were consumed in vain efforts to obtain help from the States, while he watched with painful eagerness the current of events in Europe, down which the fortunes of his country were feebly drifting.

Among the petty incidents of the year there was one which, in its effects, gained an international importance, which has left a deep stain upon the

English arms, and which touched Washington deeply. Captain Huddy, an American officer, was captured in a skirmish and carried to New York, where he was placed in confinement. Thence he was taken on April 12 by a party of Tories in the British service, commanded by Captain Lippencott, and hanged in the broad light of day on the heights near Middletown. Testimony and affidavits to the fact, which was never questioned, were duly gathered and laid before Washington. The deed was one of wanton barbarity, for which it would be difficult to find a parallel in the annals of modern warfare. The authors of this brutal murder, to our shame be it said, were of American birth, but they were fighting for the crown and wore the British uniform. England, which for generations has deafened the world with pæans of praise for her own love of fair play and for her generous humanity, stepped in here and threw the mantle of her protection over these cowardly hangmen. It has not been uncommon for wild North American savages to deliver up criminals to the vengeance of the law, but English ministers and officers condoned the murder of Huddy, and sheltered his murderers.

When the case was laid before Washington it stirred him to the deepest wrath. He submitted the facts to twenty-five of his general officers, who unanimously advised what he was himself determined upon, instant retaliation. He wrote at once to Sir Guy Carleton, and informed him that unless

the murderers were given up he should be compelled to retaliate. Carleton replied that a court-martial was ordered, and some attempt was made to recriminate; but Washington pressed on in the path he had marked out, and had an English officer selected by lot and held in close confinement to await the action of the enemy. These sharp measures brought the British, as nothing else could have done, to some sense of the enormity of the crime that had been committed. Sir Guy Carleton wrote in remonstrance, and Washington replied: "Ever since the commencement of this unnatural war my conduct has borne invariable testimony against those inhuman excesses, which, in too many instances, have marked its progress. With respect to a late transaction, to which I presume your excellency alludes, I have already expressed my resolution, a resolution formed on the most mature deliberation, and from which I shall not recede." The affair dragged along, purposely protracted by the British, and the court-martial on a technical point acquitted Lippencott. Sir Guy Carleton, however, who really was deeply indignant at the outrage, wrote, expressing his abhorrence, disavowed Lippencott, and promised a further inquiry. This placed Washington in a very trying position, more especially as his humanity was touched by the situation of the unlucky hostage. The fatal lot had fallen upon a mere boy, Captain Asgill, who was both amiable and popular, and Washington was beset with appeals in his behalf,

for Lady Asgill moved heaven and earth to save her son. She interested the French court, and Vergennes made a special request that Asgill should be released. Even Washington's own officers, notably Hamilton, sought to influence him, and begged him to recede. In these difficult circumstances, which were enhanced by the fact that contrary to his orders to select an unconditional prisoner, the lot had fallen on a Yorktown prisoner protected by the terms of the capitulation,[1] he hesitated, and asked instructions from Congress. He wrote to Duane in September: "While retaliation was apparently necessary, however disagreeable in itself, I had no repugnance to the measure. But when the end proposed by it is answered by a disavowal of the act, by a dissolution of the board of refugees, and by a promise (whether with or without meaning to comply with it, I shall not determine) that further inquisition should be made into the matter, I thought it incumbent upon me, before I proceeded any farther in the matter, to have the sense of Congress, who had most explicitly approved and impliedly indeed ordered retaliation to take place. To this hour I am held in darkness."

He did not long remain in doubt. The fact was that the public, as is commonly the case, had forgotten the original crime and saw only the misery of the man who was to pay the just penalty, and who was, in this instance, an innocent and

[1] MS. letter to Lincoln.

vicarious sufferer. It was difficult to refuse Vergennes, and Congress, glad of the excuse and anxious to oblige their allies, ordered the release of Asgill. That Washington, touched by the unhappy condition of his prisoner, did not feel relieved by the result, it would be absurd to suppose. But he was by no means satisfied, for the murderous wrong that had been done rankled in his breast. He wrote to Vergennes: "Captain Asgill has been released, and is at perfect liberty to return to the arms of an affectionate parent, whose pathetic address to your Excellency could not fail of interesting every feeling heart in her behalf. I have no right to assume any particular merit from the lenient manner in which this disagreeable affair has terminated."

There is a perfect honesty about this which is very wholesome. He had been freely charged with cruelty, and had regarded the accusation with indifference. Now, when it was easy for him to have taken the glory of mercy by simply keeping silent, he took pains to avow that the leniency was not due to him. He was not satisfied, and no one should believe that he was, even if the admission seemed to justify the charge of cruelty. If he erred at all it was in not executing some British officer at the very start, unless Lippencott had been given up within a limited time. As it was, after delay was once permitted, it is hard to see how he could have acted otherwise than he did, but Washington was not in the habit of receding from

a fixed purpose, and being obliged to do so in this case troubled him, for he knew that he did well to be angry. But the frankness of the avowal to Vergennes is a good example of his entire honesty and absolute moral fearlessness.

The matter, however, which most filled his heart and mind during these weary days of waiting and doubt was the condition and the future of his soldiers. To those persons who have suspected or suggested that Washington was cold-blooded and unmindful of others, the letters he wrote in regard to the soldiers may be commended. The man whose heart was wrung by the sufferings of the poor people on the Virginian frontier, in the days of the old French war, never in fact changed his nature. Fierce in fight, passionate and hot when his anger was stirred, his love and sympathy were keen and strong toward his army. His heart went out to the brave men who had followed him, loved him, and never swerved in their loyalty to him and to their country. Washington's affection for his men, and their devotion to him, had saved the cause of American independence more often than strategy or daring. Now, when the war was practically over, his influence with both officers and soldiers was destined to be put to its severest tests.

The people of the American colonies were self-governing in the extremest sense, that is, they were accustomed to very little government interference of any sort. They were also poor and

entirely unused to war. Suddenly they found themselves plunged into a bitter and protracted conflict with the most powerful of civilized nations. In the first flush of excitement, patriotic enthusiasm supplied many defects; but as time wore on, and year after year passed, and the whole social and political fabric was shaken, the moral tone of the people relaxed. In such a struggle, coming upon an unprepared people of the habits and in the circumstances of the colonists, this relaxation was inevitable. It was likewise inevitable that, as the war continued, there should be in both national and state governments, and in all directions, many shortcomings and many lamentable errors. But for the treatment accorded the army, no such excuse can be made, and no sufficient explanation can be offered. There was throughout the colonies an inborn and a carefully cultivated dread of standing armies and military power. But this very natural feeling was turned most unreasonably against our own army, and carried in that direction to the verge of insanity. This jealousy of military power indeed pursued Washington from the beginning to the end of the Revolution. It cropped out as soon as he was appointed, and came up in one form or another whenever he was obliged to take strong measures. Even at the very end, after he had borne the cause through to triumph, Congress was driven almost to frenzy because Vergennes proposed to commit the disposition of a French subsidy to the commander-in-chief.

If this feeling could show itself toward Washington, it is easy to imagine that it was not restrained toward his officers and men, and the treatment of the soldiers by Congress and by the States was not only ungrateful to the last degree, but was utterly unpardonable. Again and again the menace of immediate ruin and the stern demands of Washington alone extorted the most grudging concessions, and saved the army from dissolution. The soldiers had every reason to think that nothing but personal fear could obtain the barest consideration from the civil power. In this frame of mind, they saw the war which they had fought and won drawing to a close with no prospect of either provision or reward for them, and every indication that they would be disbanded when they were no longer needed, and left in many cases to beggary and want. In the inaction consequent upon the victory at Yorktown, they had ample time to reflect upon these facts, and their reflections were of such a nature that the situation soon became dangerous. Washington, who had struggled in season and out of season for justice to the soldiers, labored more zealously than ever during all this period, aided vigorously by Hamilton, who was now in Congress. Still nothing was done, and in October, 1782, he wrote to the Secretary of War in words warm with indignant feeling: "While I premise that no one I have seen or heard of appears opposed to the principle of reducing the army as circumstances may require, yet I cannot help fearing

the result of the measure in contemplation, under present circumstances, when I see such a number of men, goaded by a thousand stings of reflection on the past and of anticipation on the future, about to be turned into the world, soured by penury and what they call the ingratitude of the public, involved in debts, without one farthing of money to carry them home after having spent the flower of their days, and many of them their patrimonies, in establishing the freedom and independence of their country, and suffered everything that human nature is capable of enduring on this side of death. . . . You may rely upon it, the patriotism and long-suffering of this army are almost exhausted, and that there never was so great a spirit of discontent as at this instant. While in the field I think it may be kept from breaking into acts of outrage; but when we retire into winter-quarters, unless the storm is previously dissipated, I cannot be at ease respecting the consequences. It is high time for a peace."

These were grave words, coming from such a man as Washington, but they passed unheeded. Congress and the States went blandly along as if everything was all right, and as if the army had no grievances. But the soldiers thought differently. "Dissatisfactions rose to a great and alarming height, and combinations among officers to resign at given periods in a body were beginning to take place." The outlook was so threatening that Washington, who had intended to go to

Mount Vernon, remained in camp, and by management and tact thwarted these combinations and converted these dangerous movements into an address to Congress from the officers, asking for half-pay, arrearages, and some other equally proper concessions. Still Congress did not stir. Some indefinite resolutions were passed, but nothing was done as to the commutation of half-pay into a fixed sum, and after such a display of indifference the dissatisfaction increased rapidly, and the army became more and more restless. In March a call was issued for a meeting of officers, and an anonymous address, written with much skill, — the work, as afterwards appeared, of Major John Armstrong, — was published at the same time. The address was well calculated to inflame the passions of the troops; it advised a resort to force, and was scattered broadcast through the camp. The army was now in a ferment, and the situation was full of peril. A weak man would have held his peace; a rash one would have tried to suppress the meeting. Washington did neither, but quietly took control of the whole movement himself. In general orders he censured the call and the address as irregular, and then appointed a time and place for the meeting. Another anonymous address thereupon appeared, quieter in tone, but congratulating the army on the recognition accorded by the commander-in-chief.

When the officers assembled, Washington arose with a manuscript in his hand, and as he took out

his glasses said, simply, "You see, gentlemen, I have grown both blind and gray in your service." His address was brief, calm, and strong. The clear, vigorous sentences were charged with meaning and with deep feeling. He exhorted them one and all, both officers and men, to remain loyal and obedient, true to their glorious past and to their country. He appealed to their patriotism, and promised them that which they had always had, his own earnest support in obtaining justice from Congress. When he had finished he quietly withdrew. The officers were deeply moved by his words, and his influence prevailed. Resolutions were passed, reiterating the demands of the army, but professing entire faith in the government. This time Congress listened, and the measures granting half-pay in commutation and certain other requests were passed. Thus this very serious danger was averted, not by the reluctant action of Congress, but by the wisdom and strength of the general, who was loved by his soldiers after a fashion that few conquerors could boast.

Underlying all these general discontents, there was, besides, a well-defined movement, which saw a solution of all difficulties and a redress of all wrongs in a radical change of the form of government, and in the elevation of Washington to supreme power. This party was satisfied that the existing system was a failure, and that it was not and could not be made either strong, honest, or respectable. The obvious relief was in some kind

of monarchy, with a large infusion of the one-man power; and it followed, as a matter of course, that the one man could be no other than the commander-in-chief. In May, 1782, when the feeling in the army had risen very high, this party of reform brought their ideas before Washington through an old and respected friend of his, Colonel Nicola. The colonel set forth very clearly the failure and shortcomings of the existing government, argued in favor of the substitution of something much stronger, and wound up by hinting very plainly that his correspondent was the man for the crisis and the proper savior of society. The letter was forcible and well written, and Colonel Nicola was a man of character and standing. It could not be passed over lightly or in silence, and Washington replied as follows: —

"With a mixture of surprise and astonishment, I have read with attention the sentiments you have submitted to my perusal. Be assured, sir, no occurrence in the course of the war has given me more painful sensations than your information of there being such ideas existing in the army as you have expressed, and [which] I must view with abhorrence and reprehend with severity. For the present, the communication of them will rest in my own bosom, unless some further agitation of the matter shall make a disclosure necessary. I am much at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address which seems to me big with the greatest mischiefs

that can befall my country. If I am not deceived in the knowledge of myself, you could not have found a person to whom your schemes are more disagreeable. At the same time, in justice to my own feelings, I must add that no man possesses a more sincere wish to see justice done to the army than I do; and as far as my power and influence in a constitutional way extend, they shall be employed to the utmost of my abilities to effect it, should there be any occasion. Let me conjure you, then, if you have any regard for your country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from your mind, and never communicate, as from yourself or any one else, a sentiment of the like nature."

This simple but exceedingly plain letter checked the whole movement at once; but the feeling of hostility to the existing system of government and of confidence in Washington increased steadily through the summer and winter. When the next spring had come round, and the "Newburgh addresses" had been published, the excitement was at fever heat. All the army needed was a leader. It was as easy for Washington to have grasped supreme power then, as it would have been for Cæsar to have taken the crown from Antony upon the Lupercal. He repelled Nicola's suggestion with quiet reproof, and took the actual movement, when it reared its head, into his own hands and turned it into other channels. This incident has been passed over altogether too carelessly by his-

torians and biographers. It has generally been used merely to show the general nobility of Washington's sentiments, and no proper stress has been laid upon the facts of the time which gave birth to such an idea and such a proposition. It would have been a perfectly feasible thing at that particular moment to have altered the frame of government and placed the successful soldier in possession of supreme power. The notion of kingly government was, of course, entirely familiar to everybody, and had in itself nothing repulsive. The confederation was disintegrated, the States were demoralized, and the whole social and political life was weakened. The army was the one coherent, active, and thoroughly organized body in the country. Six years of war had turned them from militia into seasoned veterans, and they stood armed and angry, ready to respond to the call of the great leader to whom they were entirely devoted. When the English troops were once withdrawn, there was nothing on the continent that could have stood against them. If they had moved, they would have been everywhere supported by their old comrades who had returned to the ranks of civil life, by all the large class who wanted peace and order in the quickest and surest way, and by the timid and tired generally. There would have been in fact no serious opposition, probably because there would have been no means of sustaining it.

The absolute feebleness of the general govern-

ment was shown a few weeks later, when a recently recruited regiment of Pennsylvania troops mutinied, and obliged Congress to leave Philadelphia, unable either to defend themselves or procure defense from the State. This mutiny was put down suddenly and effectively by Washington, very wroth at the insubordination of raw troops, who had neither fought nor suffered. Yet even such mutineers as these would have succeeded in a large measure, had it not been for Washington, and one can easily imagine from this incident the result of disciplined and well-planned action on the part of the army led by their great chief. In that hour of debility and relaxation, a military seizure of the government and the erection of some form of monarchy would not have been difficult. Whether such a change would have lasted is another question, but there is no reason to doubt that at the moment it might have been effected. Washington, however, not only refused to have anything to do with the scheme, but he used the personal loyalty which might have raised him to supreme power to check all dangerous movements and put in motion the splendid and unselfish patriotism for which the army was conspicuous, and which underlay all their irritations and discontents.

The obvious view of Washington's action in this crisis as a remarkable exhibition of patriotism is at best somewhat superficial. In a man in any way less great, the letter of refusal to Nicola and the treatment of the opportunity presented at the

time of the Newburgh addresses would have been fine in a high degree. In Washington they were not so extraordinary, for the situation offered him no temptation. Carlyle was led to think slightingly of Washington, one may believe, because he did not seize the tottering government with a strong hand, and bring order out of chaos on the instant. But this is a woeful misunderstanding of the man. To put aside a crown for love of country is noble, but to look down upon such an opportunity indicates a much greater loftiness and strength of mind. Washington was wholly free from the vulgar ambition of the usurper, and the desire of mere personal aggrandizement found no place in his nature. His ruling passion was the passion for success, and for thorough and complete success. What he could not bear was the least shadow of failure. To have fought such a war to a victorious finish, and then turned it to his own advantage, would have been to him failure of the meanest kind. He fought to free the colonies from England, and make them independent, not to play the part of a Cæsar or a Cromwell in the wreck and confusion of civil war. He flung aside the suggestion of supreme power, not simply as dishonorable and unpatriotic, but because such a result would have defeated the one great and noble object at which he aimed. Nor did he act in this way through any indolent shrinking from the great task of making what he had won worth winning, by crushing the forces of anarchy and separation,

and bringing order and unity out of confusion. From the surrender of Yorktown to the day of his retirement from the Presidency, he worked unceasingly to establish union and strong government in the country he had made independent. He accomplished this great labor more successfully by honest and lawful methods than if he had taken the path of the strong-handed savior of society, and his work in this field did more for the welfare of his country than all his battles. To have restored order at the head of the army was much easier than to effect it in the slow and law-abiding fashion which he adopted. To have refused supreme rule, and then to have effected in the spirit and under the forms of free government all and more than the most brilliant of military chiefs could have achieved by absolute power, is a glory which belongs to Washington alone.

Nevertheless, at that particular juncture it was, as he himself had said, "high time for a peace." The danger at Newburgh had been averted by his commanding influence and the patriotic conduct of the army. But it had been averted only, not removed. The snake was scotched, not killed. The finishing stroke was still needed in the form of an end to hostilities, and it was therefore fortunate for the United States that a fortnight later, on March 23, news came that a general treaty of peace had been signed. This final consummation of his work, in addition to the passage by Congress of the half-pay commutation and the settlement of

the army accounts, filled Washington with deep rejoicing. He felt that in a short time, a few weeks at most, he would be free to withdraw to the quiet life at Mount Vernon for which he longed. But public bodies move slowly, and one delay after another occurred to keep him still in the harness. He chafed under the postponement, but it was not possible to him to remain idle even when he awaited in almost daily expectation the hour of dismissal. He saw with the instinctive glance of statesmanship that the dangerous point in the treaty of peace was in the provisions as to the western posts on the one side, and those relating to British debts on the other. A month therefore had not passed before he brought to the attention of Congress the importance of getting immediate possession of those posts, and a little later he succeeded in having Steuben sent out as a special envoy to obtain their surrender. The mission was vain, as he had feared. He was not destined to extract this thorn for many years, and then only after many trials and troubles. Soon afterward he made a journey with Governor Clinton to Ticonderoga, and along the valley of the Mohawk, "to wear away the time," as he wrote to Congress. He wore away time to more purpose than most people, for where he traveled he observed closely, and his observations were lessons which he never forgot. On this trip he had the western posts and the Indians always in mind, and familiarized himself with the conditions of a part of the country where these matters were of great importance.

On his return he went to Princeton, where Congress had been sitting since their flight from the mutiny which he had recently suppressed, and where a house had been provided for his use. He remained there two months, aiding Congress in their work. During the spring he had been engaged on the matter of a peace establishment, and he now gave Congress elaborate and well-matured advice on that question, and on those of public lands, western settlement, and the best Indian policy. In all these directions his views were clear, far-sighted, and wise. He saw that in these questions was involved much of the future development and wellbeing of the country, and he treated them with a precision and an easy mastery which showed the thought he had given to the new problems which now were coming to the front. Unluckily, he was so far ahead, both in knowledge and perception, of the body with which he dealt, that he could get little or nothing done, and in September he wrote in plain but guarded terms of the incapacity of the lawmakers. The people were not yet ripe for his measures, and he was forced to bide his time, and see the injuries caused by indifference and short-sightedness work themselves out. Gradually, however, the absolutely necessary business was brought to an end. Then Washington issued a circular letter to the governors of the States, which was one of the ablest he ever wrote, and full of the profoundest statesmanship, and he also sent out a touching address of

farewell to the army, eloquent with wisdom and with patriotism.

From Princeton he went to West Point, where the army that still remained in service was stationed. Thence he moved to Harlem, and on November 25 the British army departed, and Washington, with his troops, accompanied by Governor Clinton and some regiments of local militia, marched in and took possession. This was the outward sign that the war was over, and that American independence had been won. Carleton feared that the entry of the American army might be the signal for confusion and violence, in which the Tory inhabitants would suffer; but everything passed off with perfect tranquillity and good order, and in the evening Governor Clinton gave a public dinner to the commander-in-chief and the officers of the army.

All was now over, and Washington prepared to go to Annapolis and lay down his commission. On December 4 his officers assembled in Fraunces' Tavern to bid him farewell. As he looked about on his faithful friends, his usual self-command deserted him, and he could not control his voice. Taking a glass of wine, he lifted it up, and said simply, "With a heart full of love and gratitude I now take my leave of you, most devoutly wishing that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable." The toast was drunk in silence, and then Washington added, "I cannot come to each

of you and take my leave, but shall be obliged if you will come and take me by the hand." One by one they approached, and Washington grasped the hand of each man and embraced him. His eyes were full of tears, and he could not trust himself to speak. In silence he bade each and all farewell, and then, accompanied by his officers, walked to Whitehall Ferry. Entering his barge, the word was given, and as the oars struck the water he stood up and lifted his hat. In solemn silence his officers returned the salute, and watched the noble and gracious figure of their beloved chief until the boat disappeared from sight behind the point of the Battery.

At Philadelphia he stopped a few days and adjusted his accounts, which he had in characteristic fashion kept himself in the neatest and most methodical way. He had drawn no pay, and had expended considerable sums from his private fortune, which he had omitted to charge to the government. The gross amount of his expenses was about 15,000 pounds sterling, including secret service and other incidental outlays. In these days of wild money-hunting, there is something worth pondering in this simple business settlement between a great general and his government, at the close of eight years of war. This done, he started again on his journey. From Philadelphia he proceeded to Annapolis, greeted with addresses and hailed with shouts at every town and village on his route, and having reached his destination, he

addressed a letter to Congress on December 20, asking when it would be agreeable to them to receive him. The 23d was appointed, and on that day, at noon, he appeared before Congress.

The following year a French orator and "maître avocat," in an oration delivered at Toulouse upon the American Revolution, described this scene in these words: "On the day when Washington resigned his commission in the hall of Congress, a crown decked with jewels was placed upon the Book of the Constitutions. Suddenly Washington seizes it, breaks it, and flings the pieces to the assembled people. How small ambitious Cæsar seems beside the hero of America." It is worth while to recall this contemporary French description, because its theatrical and dramatic untruth gives such point by contrast to the plain and dignified reality. The scene was the hall of Congress. The members representing the sovereign power were seated and covered, while all the space about was filled by the governor and state officers of Maryland, by military officers, and by the ladies and gentlemen of the neighborhood, who stood in respectful silence with uncovered heads. Washington was introduced by the Secretary of Congress, and took a chair which had been assigned to him. There was a brief pause, and then the president said that "the United States in Congress assembled were prepared to receive his communication." Washington rose, and replied as follows:—

"Mr. President: The great events, on which my resignation depended, having at length taken place, I have now the honor of offering my sincere congratulations to Congress, and of presenting myself before them, to surrender into their hands the trust committed to me, and to claim the indulgence of retiring from the service of my country.

"Happy in the confirmation of our independence and sovereignty, and pleased with the opportunity afforded the United States of becoming a respectable nation, I resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with diffidence; a diffidence in my abilities to accomplish so arduous a task, which, however, was superseded by a confidence in the rectitude of our cause, the support of the supreme power of the Union, and the patronage of Heaven. The successful termination of the war has verified the most sanguine expectations; and my gratitude for the interposition of Providence, and the assistance I have received from my countrymen, increases with every review of the momentous contest." Then, after a word of gratitude to the army and to his staff, he concluded as follows: "I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life by commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them to his holy keeping.

"Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action; and bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body, under whose orders I have so long acted, I here

offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life."

In singularly graceful and eloquent words his old opponent, Thomas Mifflin, the president, replied, the simple ceremony ended, and Washington left the room a private citizen.

The great master of English fiction, touching this scene with skillful hand, has said: "Which was the most splendid spectacle ever witnessed, the opening feast of Prince George in London, or the resignation of Washington? Which is the noble character for after ages to admire, — yon fribble dancing in lace and spangles, or yonder hero who sheathes his sword after a life of spotless honor, a purity unreproached, a courage indomitable, and a consummate victory?"

There is no need to say more. Comment or criticism on such a farewell, from such a man, at the close of a long civil war, would be not only superfluous but impertinent. The contemporary newspaper, in its meagre account, said that the occasion was deeply solemn and affecting, and that many persons shed tears. Well indeed might those then present have been thus affected, for they had witnessed a scene memorable forever in the annals of all that is best and noblest in human nature. They had listened to a speech which was not equaled in meaning and spirit in American history until, eighty years later, Abraham Lincoln stood upon the slopes of Gettysburg and uttered his immortal words upon those who died that the country might live.

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, U. S. A.
ELECTROTYPED AND PRINTED BY
H. O. HOUGHTON AND CO.